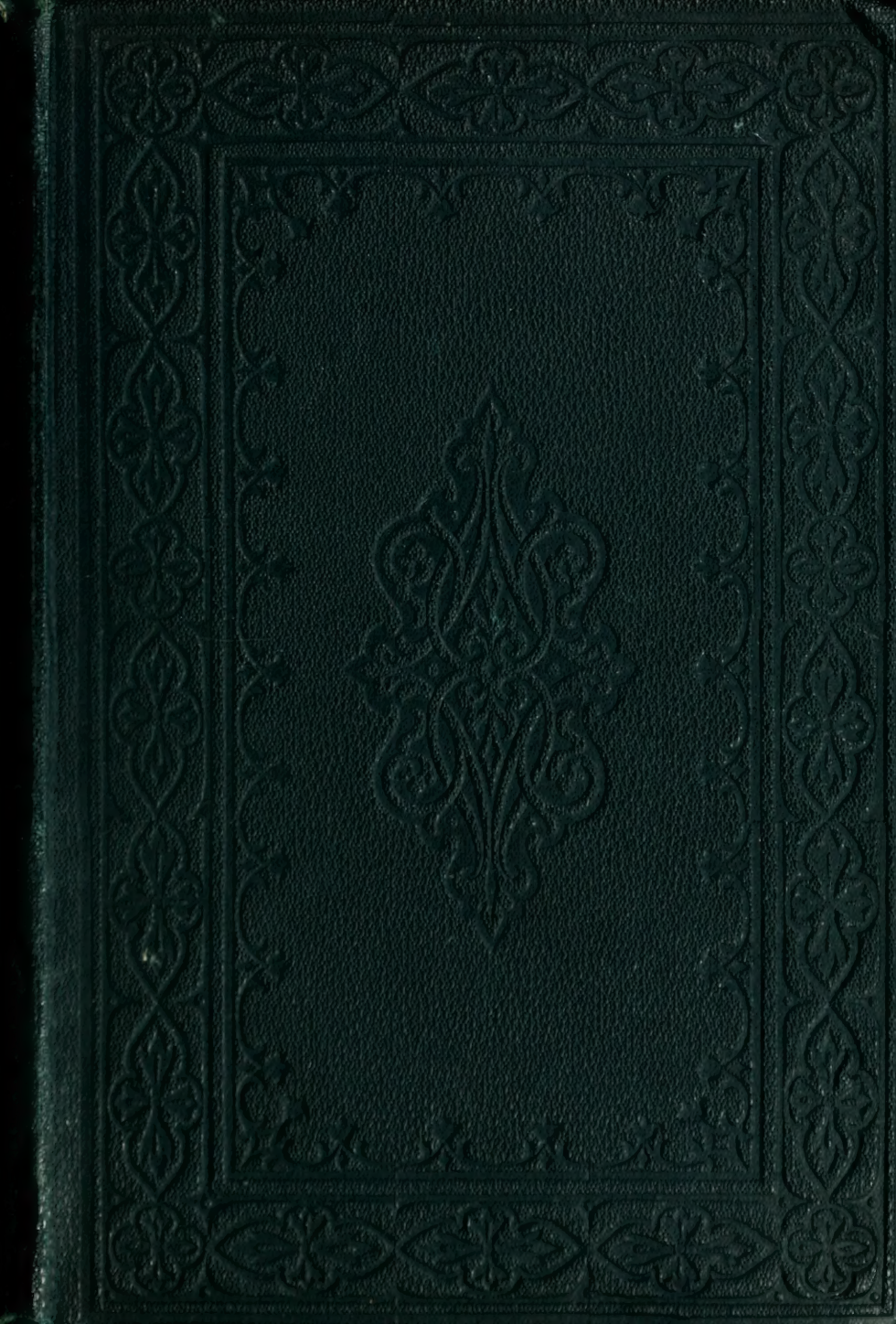






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ESSAYS
ON
THE FINE ARTS

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ESSAYS
ON
THE FINE ARTS

By WILLIAM HAZLITT

A NEW EDITION

BY

W. CAREW HAZLITT

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PREFACE.

THE present edition of Hazlitt's Essays on the Fine Arts proceeds on the plan of collecting together, so far as was found practicable, all the papers written on this subject, and not included in the new collection of Hazlitt's miscellaneous works. A few articles, properly belonging to the series, have been already included in *Table-Talk* and the *Plain Speaker*, to which the author originally contributed them.

The articles headed *The Character of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, and *An Inquiry whether the Fine Arts are promoted by Academies, &c.*, were afterwards incorporated with that entitled the *Fine Arts*, written for the "Encyclopædia Britannica" in 1824. This circumstance had escaped the editor's notice, or those two earlier essays would not have, of course, been given in their separate and original shape also.

4-19-61 Agden Collection

It is proposed that the volume now issued, the Seventh of the Series, should be followed by one of *Uncollected Papers*, with a new and original portrait of the author from a painting by himself. Many of these papers are derived from sources little known.

W. C. H.

KENSINGTON, *April* 1873.

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HAZLITT'S

CRITICISMS ON ART.

ON HAYDON'S SOLOMON.*

THE Tenth Exhibition of the Society of Painters in Oil and Water Colours opened on Monday last. The productions of Glover, Cristall, De Wint, &c., principally fill and adorn the Water Colour Department. Among the oil pictures in the room, the principal are *The Judgment of Solomon*, by Mr Haydon, and *Don Quixote receiving Mambrino's Helmet from Sancho*, by Mr Richter. The former is a work that evidently claims a place in the higher department of art; and we are little disposed to reject that claim. It certainly shows a bold and aspiring mind; in many parts (that which we hold above all other things to be essential to the painter) an eye for the picturesque both in form and colour, considerable variety of expression, attitude, and character, and great vigour and rapidity of execution throughout. It would, at the same time, be in vain to deny that the success is not always in proportion to the effort made; that the conception of character is sometimes erroneous; that the desire to avoid insipidity and monotony had occasionally led to extravagance and distortion; that there are great inequalities in the style, and some inconsistencies in the composition; and that, however striking and admirable many of the parts are, there is a

* *Morning Chronicle*, May 4 and 5, 1811. See further on this subject, "Memoirs of William Hazlitt," 1867, i. 211-12. — Ed.

want of union and complete harmony between them. What was said of the *disjecta membra poetæ* is not inapplicable to this picture. It exhibits fine studies and original fragments of a great work—it has many powerful starts of genius—without conveying that impression of uniform consistency and combined effect which is sometimes attained by the systematic mechanism of well-disciplined dullness, and at others is the immediate emanation of genius.

That which strikes the eye most on entering the room, and on which it dwells with the greatest admiration afterwards, are the figures of the two Jewish doctors on the left side of Solomon. We do not recollect any figures in modern pictures which have a more striking effect. We say this, not only with respect to the solid mass of colour which they project on the eye, the dark draperies contrasting finely with the paleness of the countenances, but also with respect to the force, truth, and dramatic opposition of character displayed in them. The face of the one is turned in anxious expectation towards the principal actors in the scene; the other looking downwards appears lost in inward meditation upon it. The one is eagerly watching for the catastrophe—the other seems endeavouring to anticipate it. Too much praise cannot be given to the conception of the figure of Solomon, which is raised above the rest of the picture, and placed in the centre—the face fronting, and looking down, the action balanced and suspended, and the face intended to combine the different characters of youth, beauty, and wisdom. Such is evidently the conception of the painter, which we think equally striking and just; but we are by no means satisfied that he has succeeded in embodying this idea, except as far as relates to the design. The expression of the countenance of the youthful judge, which ought to convey the feeling of calm penetration, we think, degenerates into supercilious indifference; the action given

to the muscles is such as to destroy the beauty of the features, without giving force to the character, and, instead of the majesty of conscious power and intellect, there is an appearance of languid indecision, which seems to shrink with repugnance from the difficulties which it has to encounter. The colouring of the head is unexceptionable. In the face of the good mother the artist has, in our opinion, succeeded in overcoming that which has been always considered as the greatest difficulty of the art—the union of beauty with strong expression. The whole face exhibits the internal workings of maternal love and fear; but its death-like paleness and agony do not destroy the original character of feminine beauty and delicacy. The attitude of this figure is decidedly bad, and out of nature as well as decorum. It is one of those sprawling, extravagant, theatrical French figures, in which a common action is strained to the extremity of caricature. The action and expression of the executioner are liable to the same objection. He is turbulent and fierce, instead of being cold and obdurate. He should not bluster in the part heroically like an actor—it is his office. On the whole, we think this picture decidedly superior to any of this artist's former productions, and a proof not only of genius, but of improved taste and judgment. In speaking of it with freedom, we trust we shall best serve both him and the art.

AN INQUIRY

WHETHER THE FINE ARTS ARE PROMOTED BY ACADEMIES
AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS.*

"It was ever the trick of our English nation, if they had a good thing, to make it too common."

THE Directors of the British Institution conclude the preface to their catalogue of the works of Hogarth, Wilson, &c., in the following words :—

"The present exhibition, while it gratifies the taste and feeling of the lover of art, may tend to excite animating reflections in the mind of the artist: *if at a time when the art received little comparative support such works were produced, a reasonable hope may be entertained that we shall see productions of still higher attainment under more encouraging circumstances.*"

It should seem that a contrary conclusion might more naturally have suggested itself from a contemplation of the collection with which the Directors of the Institution have so highly gratified the public taste and feeling. When the real lover of art looks round and sees the works of Hogarth and of Wilson—works which were produced in obscurity and poverty—and recollects the pomp and pride of patronage under which these works are at present recommended to public notice, the obvious inference which strikes him is—how little the production of such works depends on "the most encouraging circumstances." The visits of the gods of old did not always add to the felicity of those whose guests they were; nor do we know that the countenance and favours of the great will lift the arts

* *Champion*, August 28 and September 11, 1814.

to that height of excellence, or will confer all those advantages which are expected from the proffered boon. The arts are of humble growth and station ; they are the product of labour and self-denial ; they have their seat in the heart of man and in his imagination ; it is there they labour, have their triumphs there, and, unseen and unthought of, perform their ceaseless task. Indeed, patronage and works of art deserving patronage rarely exist together, for it is only when the arts have attracted public esteem, and reflect credit on the patron, that they receive this flattering support, and then it generally proves fatal to them. We really do not see how the man of genius should be improved by being transplanted from his closet to the ante-chambers of the great, or to a fashionable rout. He has no business there—but to bow, to flatter, to smile, to submit to the caprice of taste, to adjust his dress, to think of nothing but his own person and his own interest, to talk of the antique, and furnish designs for the lids of snuff-boxes, and ladies' fans !

The passage above alluded to evidently proceeds on the common mistaken notion that the progress of the arts depends entirely on the cultivation and encouragement bestowed on them ; as if taste and genius were perfectly mechanical, arbitrary things—as if they could be bought and sold, and regularly contracted for at a given price. It confounds the fine arts with the mechanic arts—art with science. It supposes that feeling, imagination, invention are the creatures of positive institution ; that the temples of the muses may be raised and supported by voluntary contribution ; that we can enshrine the soul of art in a stately pile of royal patronage, inspire corporate bodies with taste, and carve out the direction to fame in letters of stone on the front of public buildings. That the arts in any country may be at so low an ebb as to be capable of great improvement by positive means, so as to reach the common level to which such means can carry them, there

is no doubt or question ; but after they have in any particular instance, by native genius and industry, reached their highest eminence, to say that they will, by mere artificial props and officious encouragement, arrive at a point of "still higher attainment," is assuming a good deal too much. Are we to understand that the laudable efforts of the British Institution are likely, by the mere operation of natural causes, to produce a greater comic painter, a more profound describer of manners than Hogarth? or even that the lights and expectations, held out in the preface to the British catalogue, will enable some one speedily to surpass the general excellence of Wilson's landscapes? Is there anything in the history of art to warrant such a conclusion—to support this theory of progressive perfectibility under the auspices of patrons and vice-patrons, presidents and select committees?

On the contrary, as far as the general theory is concerned, the traces of youth, manhood, and old age are almost as distinctly marked in the history of the art as of the individual. The arts have in general risen rapidly from their first obscure dawn to their meridian height and greatest lustre, and have no sooner reached this proud eminence than they have as rapidly hastened to decay and dissolution. It is a little extraordinary, if the real sources of perfection are to be sought in schools, in models, and public institutions, that wherever there are schools, models, and public institutions, there the arts should regularly disappear—that the effect should never follow from the cause. The Greek statues remain to this day unrivalled—the undisputed standards of the most perfect symmetry of form. What then has the genius of progressive improvement been doing all this time? Has he been reposing after his labours? How is it that the moderns are still so far behind, notwithstanding all that was done ready to their hands by the ancients—when they possess a double advantage over them, and have not nature only to form themselves upon, but

nature and the antique? In Italy the art of painting had the same fate. After its long and painful struggles in the time of the earlier artists—Cimabue, Ghirlandajo, Masaccio, &c.—it burst out with a light too dazzling to behold in the works of Titian, Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Correggio, which was reflected, with diminished lustre, in the productions of their immediate disciples—lingered for awhile with the school of Domenichino and the Caracci—and expired with Guido Reni. For with him disappeared

“the last of those bright clouds
That, on the unsteady breeze of honour, sailed
In long procession, calm and beautiful.”

From that period painting sank to so low a pitch in Italy as to excite our pity or contempt. There is not a single name to redeem its faded glory from utter oblivion. Yet this has not been owing to any want of Dilettanti and Della Cruscan societies—of academies of Florence, of Bologna, of Parma, and Pisa—of honorary members and foreign correspondents—of pupils and teachers, professors and patrons, and the whole buzzing tribe of critics and connoisseurs. Art will not be constrained by mastery, but, at sight of the formidable array prepared to receive it,

“Spreads its light wings, and in a moment flies.”

The genius of painting lies buried under the Vatican, or skulks behind some old portraits of Titian, from which it stole out lately to paint a miniature of Lady Montagu! What has become of the successors of Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vandyck? What have the French academicians ever done for the arts, or what will they ever do, but add intolerable grimace and affectation to centos of heads from the antique—and caricature Greek forms by putting them with the flighty French attitudes? Was Claude Lorraine or Nicolas Poussin formed by the rules of De Piles or Du Fresnoy? There are no general tickets of admission to the temple of fame, transferable to large societies or

organised bodies—the paths leading to it are steep and narrow, for by the time they are worn plain and easy the niches are full. What extraordinary advances have we made in our own country in consequence of the establishment of the Royal Academy? What greater names has the British school to boast than those of Hogarth, Reynolds, and Wilson, who owed nothing to it? Even the venerable president of the Royal Academy was one of its founders.

It is plain, then, that the sanguine anticipation of the preface-writer, however amiable and patriotic in its motive, has little foundation in fact. It has even less in the true theory and principles of excellence in the art.

“It has been often made a subject of complaint,” says a contemporary critic, “that the arts in this country and in modern times have not kept pace with the general progress of society and civilisation in other respects, and it has been proposed to remedy the deficiency by more carefully availing ourselves of the advantages which time and circumstances have placed within our reach, but which we have hitherto unaccountably neglected—the study of the antique, the imitation of the best models, the formation of academies, and the distribution of prizes.

“First. The complaint itself of the want of progressive perfection in the art is unreasonable; for the general analogy appealed to in support of the regular advances of art to higher degrees of excellence, totally fails; it applies to *science*, not to art.

“Secondly. The expedients proposed to remedy the evil by adventitious helps are only calculated to confirm it. The arts hold immediate communication with nature, and must be derived from that source. When the original impulse no longer exists, when the inspiration of genius is fled, all the attempts to recall it are no better than the tricks of galvanism to restore the dead to life. The arts may be said to resemble Antæus in his struggle with Hercules, who was strangled when he was raised above the ground,

and only revived and recovered his strength, when he touched his mother earth."

We intend to offer a few general observations in illustration of this view of the subject, which appears to us to be just. There are three ways in which institutions for the promotion of the fine arts may be supposed to favour the object in view—either by furnishing the best models to the student, or by holding out the prospect of immediate patronage and reward, or by diffusing a more general taste for the arts. All of these, so far from answering the end proposed, will be found on examination to have a contrary tendency.

There are three ways in which academies or public institutions might be supposed to promote the fine arts—either by furnishing the best models to the student, or by holding out immediate emolument and patronage, or by improving the public taste. We shall consider each of these in order.

A constant reference to the best models of art necessarily tends to enervate the mind, to intercept our view of nature, and to distract the attention by a variety of unattainable excellences. An intimate acquaintance with the works of the celebrated masters may, indeed, add to the indolent refinements of taste, but will never produce one work of original genius—one great artist. In proof of the general truth of this observation, we might cite the works of Carlo Maratti, of Raphael Mengs, or of any of the effeminate school of critics and copyists who have attempted to blend the borrowed beauties of others in a perfect whole. What do they contain but a negation of every excellence which they pretend to combine? Inoffensive insipidity is the utmost that can ever be expected, because it is the utmost that ever was attained, from the desire to produce a balance of good qualities, and to animate lifeless compositions by the transfusion of the spirit of originality. The thoughtless imitator, in his attempts to grasp all, loses his hold of that

which was placed within his reach, and from aspiring at universal excellence sinks into uniform mediocrity.* Besides, the student who has models of every kind of excellence constantly before him, is not only diverted from that particular walk of art in which, by patient exertion, he might have obtained ultimate success, but from having his imagination habitually raised to an overstrained standard of refinement, by the sight of the most exquisite examples of the art, becomes impatient and dissatisfied with his own attempts, wishes to reach the same perfection all at once, or throws down his pencil in despair. Thus the young enthusiast, whose genius and energy were to rival the great masters of antiquity, or create a new era in the art itself, baffled in his first sanguine expectations, reposes in indolence on what others have done—wonders how such perfection should have been achieved, grows familiar with the minutest peculiarities of the different masters, flutters between the colouring of Rubens and the grace of Raphael, finds it easier to copy pictures than to paint them, and easier to *see* than to copy them, takes infinite pains to gain admission to all the great collections, lounges from one auction-room to another, and writes newspaper criticisms on the fine arts. Such was not Correggio; he saw and felt for himself; he was of no school, but had his own world of art to create. That image of truth and beauty which existed in his mind he was forced to construct for himself without rules or models. As it could only have arisen in his mind from the

* There is a certain pedantry, a given division of labour, an almost exclusive attention to some one object, which is necessary in art, as in all the works of man. Without this, the unavoidable consequence is a gradual dissipation and prostitution of intellect, which leaves the mind without energy to devote to any pursuit the pains necessary to excel in it, and suspends every purpose in irritable imbecility. But the modern painter is bound not only to run the circle of his own art but of all others. He must be "statesman, chemist, fiddler, and buffoon." He must have too many accomplishments to excel in his profession. When every one is bound to know everything, there is no time to do anything.

contemplation of nature, so he could only hope to embody it to others by the imitation of nature. We can conceive the work growing under his hands—by slow and patient touches approaching nearer to perfection, softened into finer grace, gaining strength from delicacy, and at last reflecting the pure image of nature on the canvas. Such is always the true progress of art ; such are the necessary means by which the greatest works of every kind have been produced. They have been the effect of power gathering strength from exercise, and warmth from its own impulse—stimulated to fresh efforts by conscious success, and by the surprise and strangeness of a new world of beauty opening to the delighted imagination. The triumphs of art were victories over the difficulties of art ; the prodigies of genius, the result of that strength which had grappled with nature. Titian copied even a plant or a piece of common drapery from the objects themselves ; and Raphael is known to have made elaborate studies of the principal heads in his pictures. All the great painters of this period were thoroughly grounded in the first principles of their art ; had learned to copy a head, a hand, or an eye, and had acquired patience to finish a single figure, before they undertook to paint extensive compositions. They knew that, though Fame is represented with her head above the clouds, her feet rest upon the earth. Genius can only have its full scope where, though much may have been done, more remains to be done ; where models exist chiefly to show the deficiencies of art, and where the perfect idea is left to be filled up in the painter's imagination. Where the stimulus of novelty and of necessary exertion is wanting, generations repose on what has been done for them by their predecessors, as individuals, after a certain period, rest satisfied with the knowledge they have already acquired.

To proceed to the proposed advantages to be derived, in a pecuniary point of view, from the public patronage of the

arts. It in this respect unfortunately defeats itself ; for it multiplies its objects faster than it can satisfy their claims, and raises up a swarm of competitors for the prize of genius from the dregs of idleness and dulness. The real patron is anxious to reward merit, not to encourage gratuitous pretenders to it—to see that the man of genius *takes no detriment* ; that another Wilson is not left to perish for want—not to propagate the breed, for that he knows to be impossible. But there are some persons who think it is essential to the interests of art, to keep up “an airy of children”—the young fry of embryo candidates for fame—as others think it essential to the welfare of the kingdom to preserve the spawn of the herring fisheries. In general, public, that is, indiscriminate patronage is, and can be, nothing better than a species of intellectual seduction, by administering provocatives to vanity and avarice—it is leading astray the youth of this nation by fallacious hopes which can scarcely ever be realised—it is beating up for raw dependents, sending out into the highways for the halt, the lame and the blind, and making a scramble among a set of idle boys for prizes of the first, second, and third class, like those we make among children for gingerbread toys. True patronage does not consist in ostentatious professions of high keeping, and promiscuous intercourse with the arts. At the same time, the good that might be done by private taste and benevolence is in a great measure prevented. The moment that a few individuals of taste and liberal spirit become members of a public body they are no longer any thing more than parts of a machine, which is usually wielded at will by some overbearing, officious intruder—their good sense and good nature are lost in a mass of ignorance and presumption, their names only serve to reflect credit on proceedings in which they have no share, and which are determined upon by a majority of persons who have no interest in the arts but what arises from the importance attached to them by regular organisation, and

no opinions but what are dictated to them by some self-constituted judge. Whenever vanity and self-importance are (as in general they must be) the governing principles of systems of public patronage, there is an end at once of all candour and directness of conduct. Their decisions are before the public ; and the individuals who take the lead in these decisions are responsible for them. They have therefore to manage the public opinion in order to secure that of their own body. Hence, instead of giving a firm, manly, and independent tone to that opinion, it is their business to watch all its caprices, and follow it in every casual turning. They dare not give their sanction to sterling merit, struggling with difficulties, but take every advantage of its success to reflect credit on their own reputation for sagacity. Their taste is a servile dependent on their vanity, and their patronage has an air of pauperism about it. They neglect or treat with insult the favourite whom they suspect of having fallen off in the opinion of the public ; but if he is able to recover his ground without their assistance, are ready to heap their mercenary bounties upon those of others—greet him with friendly congratulations, and share his triumph with him.

Perhaps the only public patronage which was ever really useful to the arts, or worthy of them, was that which they received, first in Greece and then in Italy, from the religious institutions of the country ; when the artist felt himself, as it were, a servant at the altar ; when his hand gave a visible form to gods or angels, heroes or apostles ; and when the enthusiasm of genius was exalted by mingling with the flame of national devotion. The artist was not here degraded by being made the dependent on the caprice of wealth or fashion, but felt himself at once a public benefactor. He had to embody by the highest effort of his art subjects which were sacred to the imagination and feelings of the spectators : there was a common link, a mutual sympathy, between them,

in their common faith.* Every other mode of patronage but that which arises either from the general institutions of the country or from the real unaffected taste of individuals, must, we conceive, be illegitimate, corrupted in its source, and either ineffectual or prejudicial to its object. Positive encouragements and rewards will not make an honest man or a great artist. The assumed familiarity and condescending goodness of patrons and vice-patrons will serve to intoxicate rather than to sober the mind, and a card to dinner in Cleveland Row or Portland Place will have a tendency to divert the student's thoughts from his morning's work, rather than to rivet them upon it. The device by which a celebrated painter has represented the Virgin teaching the infant Christ to read by pointing with a butterfly to the letters of the alphabet has not been thought a very wise one. Correggio is the most melancholy instance on record of the want of a proper encouragement of the arts: but a golden shower of patronage, tempting as that which fell into the lap of his own Danaë, and dropping prize medals and epic mottoes, would not produce another Correggio!

We shall conclude with offering some remarks on the question—whether academies and institutions must not

* Of the effect of the *authority* of the subject of a composition, in suspending the exercise of personal taste and feeling in the spectators, we have a striking instance in our own country, where this cause must, from collateral circumstances, operate less forcibly. Mr West's pictures would not be tolerated but from the respect inspired by the subjects of which he treats. When a young lady and her mother, the wife and daughter of a clergyman, are told that a gawky ill-favoured youth is the beloved disciple of Christ, and that a tall starched figure of a woman visible near him is the Virgin Mary, whatever they might have thought before, they can no more refrain from shedding tears than if they had seen the very persons recorded in sacred history. It is not the picture, but the associations connected with it, that produce the effect. Just as if the same young lady and her mother had been told, "That is the Emperor Alexander," they would say, "*What a handsome man!*" or if they were shown the Prince Regent, would exclaim, "*How elegant!*"

be supposed to assist the progress of the fine arts by promoting a wider taste for them.

In general, it must happen in the first stages of the arts that, as none but those who had a natural genius for them would attempt to practise them, so none but those who had a natural taste for them would pretend to judge of or criticise them. This must be an incalculable advantage to the man of true genius, for it is no other than the privilege of being tried by his peers. In an age when connoisseurship had not become a fashion, when religion, war and intrigue occupied the time and thoughts of the great, only those minds of superior refinement would be led to notice the works of art, who had a real sense of their excellence; and in giving way to the powerful bent of his own genius the painter was most likely to consult the taste of his judges. He had not to deal with pretenders to taste through vanity, affectation and idleness. He had to appeal to the higher faculties of the soul; to that deep and innate sensibility to truth and beauty which required only an object to have its enthusiasm excited; and to that independent strength of mind which, in the midst of ignorance and barbarism, hailed and fostered genius wherever it met with it. Titian was patronised by Charles V.—Count Castiglione was the friend of Raphael. These were true patrons and true critics: and as there were no others (for the world in general merely looked on and wondered), there can be little doubt that such a period of dearth of fictitious patronage would be the most favourable to the full development of the greatest talents and the attainment of the highest excellence.

The diffusion of taste is not, then, the same thing as the improvement of taste; but it is only the former of these objects that is promoted by public institutions and other artificial means. The number of candidates for fame, and of pretenders to criticism, is thus increased

beyond all proportion, but the quantity of genius and feeling remains the same, with this difference, that the man of genius is lost in the crowd of competitors who would never have become such but from encouragement and example ; and that the opinion of those few persons whom nature intended for judges is drowned in the noisy decisions of shallow smatterers in taste. The principle of universal suffrage, however applicable to matters of government, which concern the common feelings and common interests of society, is by no means applicable to matters of taste, which can only be decided upon by the most refined understandings. It is throwing down the barriers, which separate knowledge and feeling from ignorance and vulgarity, and proclaiming a Bartholomew-fair-show of the fine arts—

“ And fools rush in where angels fear to tread.”

The public taste is, therefore, necessarily vitiated, in proportion as it is public ; it is lowered with every infusion it receives of common opinion. The greater the number of judges, the less capable must they be of judging, for the addition to the number of good ones will always be small, while the multitude of bad ones is endless, and thus the decay of art may be said to be the necessary consequence of its progress.

Can there be a greater confirmation of these remarks than to look at the texture of that assemblage of select critics who every year visit the exhibition at Somerset House from all parts of the metropolis of this United Kingdom ? Is it at all wonderful, that for such a succession of connoisseurs such a collection of works of art should be provided ; where the eye in vain seeks relief from the glitter of the frames in the glare of the pictures ; where vermilion cheeks make vermilion lips look pale ; where the merciless splendour of the painter's pallet puts nature out of countenance ; and where the unmeaning grimace

of fashion and folly is almost the only variety in the wide dazzling waste of colour. Indeed, the great error of British art has hitherto been a desire to produce popular effect by the cheapest and most obvious means, and at the expense of everything else ;—to lose all the delicacy and variety of nature in one undistinguished bloom of florid health, and all precision, truth, and refinement of character in the same harmless mould of smiling, self-complacent insipidity,

“Pleased with itself, that all the world can please.”

It is probable that in all that stream of idleness and curiosity which flows in, hour after hour, and day after day, to the richly hung apartments of Somerset-house, there are not fifty persons to be found who can really distinguish a “Guido from a daub,” or who would recognise a work of the most refined genius from the most common and everyday performance. Come, then, ye banks of Wapping, and classic haunts of Ratcliffe-highway, and join thy fields, blithe Tothill—let the postchaises, gay with oaken boughs, be put in requisition for school-boys from Eton and Harrow, and school-girls from Hackney and Mile-end,—and let a jury be empanelled to decide on the merits of Raphael, and . . . the verdict will be infallible. We remember having been formerly a good deal amused with seeing a smart, handsome-looking Quaker lad, standing before a picture of Christ as the Saviour of the world, with a circle of young female friends around him, and a newspaper in his hand, out of which he read to his admiring auditors a criticism on the picture ascribing to it every perfection, human and divine. Now, in truth, the colouring was anything but solemn, the drawing anything but grand, the expression anything but sublime. The friendly critic had, however, bedaubed it so with praise, that it was not easy to gain say its wondrous excellence. In fact, one of the worst consequences of the

establishment of academies, &c. is, that the rank and station of the painter throw a lustre round his pictures, which imposes completely on the herd of spectators, and makes it a kind of treason against the art for any one to speak his mind freely, or detect the imposture. If, indeed, the election to title and academic honours went by merit, this might form a kind of clue or standard for the public to decide justly upon :—but we have heard that genius and taste determine precedence there, almost as little as at court ; and that modesty and talent stand very little chance indeed with interest, cabal, impudence, and cunning. The purity or liberality of professional decisions cannot, therefore, in such cases be expected to counteract the tendency which an appeal to the public has to lower the standard of taste. The artist, to succeed, must let himself down to the level of his judges, for he cannot raise them up to his own. The highest efforts of genius, in every walk of art, can never be properly understood by mankind in general : there are numberless beauties and truths which lie far beyond their comprehension. It is only as refinement or sublimity are blended with other qualities of a more obvious and common nature, that they pass current with the world. Common sense, which has been sometimes appealed to as the criterion of taste, is nothing but the common capacity, applied to common facts and feelings ; but it neither is, nor pretends to be, the judge of anything else. To suppose that it can really appreciate the excellence of works of high art, is as absurd as to suppose that it could produce them. Taste is the highest degree of sensibility, or the impression of the most cultivated and sensible minds, as genius is the result of the highest powers of feeling and invention. It may be objected that the public taste is capable of gradual improvement, because, in the end, the public do justice to works of the greatest merit. This is a mistake. The reputation, ultimately and slowly affixed to works of genius, is stamped

upon them by authority, not by popular consent, nor the common sense of the world. We imagine that the admiration of the works of celebrated men has become common, because the admiration of their names has become so. But does not every ignorant connoisseur pretend the same veneration, and talk with the same vapid assurance, of M. Angelo, though he has never seen even a copy of any of his pictures, as if he had studied them accurately,—merely because Sir J. Reynolds has praised him? Is Milton more popular now than when the *Paradise Lost* was first published? Or does he not rather owe his reputation to the judgment of a few persons, in every successive period, accumulating in his favour, and overpowering by its weight the public indifference? Why is Shakespeare popular? Not from his refinement of character or sentiment, so much as from his power of telling a story,—the variety and invention,—the tragic catastrophe, and broad farce, of his plays. His characters of Imogen or Desdemona, Hamlet or Kent, are little understood or relished by the generality of readers. Does not Boccaccio pass to this day for a writer of ribaldry, because his jests and lascivious tales were all that caught the vulgar ear, while the story of the Falcon is forgotten?

I beg* to offer one or two explanations with respect to the former part of this paper, which does not appear to me to have been exactly understood by “A Student of the Royal Academy.”† The whole drift of it is to explode the visionary theory, that art may go on in an infinite series of imitations and improvements. This theory has not a single fact or argument to support it. All the highest efforts of art originate in the imitation of nature, and end there. No imitation of others can carry us

* The remainder of this paper appeared in the *Champion* of Oct. 21, 1814, in the form of a letter to the editor.—Ed.

† See the letter so signed in the *Champion* under date of Sept. 25, 1814.—Ed.

beyond this point, or ever enable us to reach it. The imitation of the works of genius facilitates the acquisition of a certain degree of excellence, but weakens and distracts while it facilitates, and renders the acquisition of the highest degree of excellence impossible. Wherever the greatest individual genius has been exerted upon the finest models of nature, there the greatest works of art have been produced,—the Greek statues and the Italian pictures. There is no substitute in art for nature; in proportion as we remove from this original source, we dwindle into mediocrity and flimsiness; and whenever the artificial and systematic assistance afforded to genius becomes extreme, it overlays it altogether. We cannot make use of other men's minds, any more than of their limbs.* Art is not science, nor is the progress made in the one ever like the progress made in the other. The one is retrograde for the very same reason that the other is progressive; because science is mechanical, and art is not; and in proportion as we rely on mechanical means, we lose the essence. Is there a single exception to this rule? The worst artists in the world are the modern Italians, who live in the midst of the finest works of art:—the persons least like the Greek sculptors are the modern French painters, who copy nothing but the antique. Velasquez might be improved by a pilgrimage to the Vatican, but if it had been his morning's lounge, it would have ruined him. Michael Angelo, the cartoons of Leonardo da Vinci, and the antique, your correspondent tells us, produced Raphael. Why have they produced no second Raphael? What produced Michael Angelo,

* Occasional assistance may be derived from both, but, in general, we must trust to our own strength. We cannot hope to become rich by living upon alms. Constant assistance is the worst incumbrance. The accumulation of models, and erection of universal schools for art, improve the genius of the student much in the same way that the encouragement of night-cellars and gin-shops improves the health and morals of the people.

Leonardo da Vinci, and the antique? Surely not Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the antique! If Sir Joshua Reynolds would never have observed a certain expression in nature, if he had not seen it in Correggio, it is tolerably certain that he would never execute it so well; and in fact, though Sir Joshua was largely indebted to Correggio, yet his imitations are not equal to the originals. The two little boys in Correggio's *Danaë* are worth all the children Sir Joshua ever painted: and the Hymen in the same picture, (with leave be it spoken,) is worth all his works put together.—But the student of the Royal Academy thinks that Carlo Maratti and Raphael Mengs are only exceptions to the common rule of progressive improvement in the art. If these are the exceptions, where are the examples? If we are to credit him, and it would be uncivil not to do it, they are to be found in the present students of the Royal Academy, whom, he says, it would be unreasonable to confound with such minds as those of Carlo Maratti and Raphael Mengs. Be it so. This is a point to be decided by time.

The whole question was at once decided by the person who said that “*to imitate the Iliad, was not to imitate Homer.*” After this has once been stated, it is quite in vain to argue the point further. The idea of piling art on art, and heaping excellence on excellence, is a mere fable; and we may very safely say, that the frontispiece of all such pretended institutions and academies for the promotion of the fine arts, founded on this principle, and “pointing to the skies,” should be—

“Like a tall bully, lifts the head, and lies.”

Absurd as this theory is, it flatters our vanity and our indolence, and these are two great points gained. It is gratifying to suppose that art may have gone on from the beginning, reposing upon art, like the Indian elephant and

tortoise ; that it has improved, and will still go on improving, without the trouble of going back to nature. By these theorists nature is always kept in the back-ground, or does not even terminate the vista in their prospects. She is a mistress too importunate, and who requires too great sacrifices from the effeminacy of modern amateurs. They will only see her in company, or by proxy, and are as much afraid of being reduced to their shifts with her in private, as *Tattle*, in *Love for Love*, was afraid of being left alone with a pretty girl.

I can only recollect one other thing to reply to. Your correspondent objects to my having said, "All the great painters of this period were thoroughly grounded in the first principles of their art ; had learned to copy a head, a hand, or an eye," &c. All this knowledge of detail he attributes to academical instruction, and quotes Sir Joshua Reynolds, who says of himself—"Not having had the advantage of an early academical education, I never had that facility in drawing the naked figure, which an artist ought to have." First, I might answer, that the drawing from casts can never assist the student in copying the face, the eye, or the extremities ; and that it was only of service in the knowledge of the trunk and the general proportions, which are comparatively lost in the style of English art, which is not naked, but clothed. Secondly, I would say, with respect to Sir Joshua, that his inability to draw the naked figure arose from his not having been accustomed to draw it ; and that drawing from the antique would not have enabled either him or any one else to draw from the naked figure. The difficulty of copying from nature, or in other words of doing anything that has not been done before, or that is worth doing, is that of combining many ideas at once, or of reconciling things in motion : whereas in copying from the antique, you have only to copy still life, and in proportion as you get a knack at the one, you disqualify yourself for the other.

As to what your correspondent adds of painting and poetry being the same thing, it is an old story which I do not believe. But who would ever think of setting up a school of poetry? Bysshe's *Art of Poetry* and the *Gradus ad Parnassum* are a jest. Royal academies and British institutions are to painting, what Bysshe's *Art of Poetry* and the *Gradus ad Parnassum* are to the "sister art." Poetry, as it becomes artificial, becomes bad, instead of good—the poetry of words, instead of things. Milton is the only poet who gave to borrowed materials the force of originality.

CHARACTER OF SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.*

THE authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds, both from his example and his instructions, has had, and still continues to have a considerable influence on the state of art in this country. That influence has been on the whole unquestionably beneficial in itself, as well as highly creditable to the rare talents and elegant mind of Sir Joshua, for it has raised the art of painting from the lowest state of degradation, of dry, meagre, and lifeless inanity, to something at least respectable, and bearing an affinity to the rough strength and bold spirit of the national character. Whether the same implicit deference to his authority, which has helped to advance the art thus far, may not, among other causes, limit and retard its future progress; whether there are not certain original errors both in his principles and practice, which the farther they are proceeded in, the farther they will lead us from the truth; whether there is not a systematic bias from the right line by which alone we can arrive at the goal of the highest excellence,—is a question well worth considering. From the great and substantial merits of the late president we have as little the inclination as the power to detract. But we certainly think that they have been sometimes over-rated from the partiality of friends and from the influence of fashion. However necessary and useful the ebullitions of public or private enthusiasm may be to counteract the common prejudices against new claims to reputation, and to lift rising genius to its just rank, there is a time, when, having accomplished its end, our zeal

* Now first republished from the *Champion*, Oct. 30 and Nov. 6, 1814.—ED.

may be suffered to subside into discretion, and when it becomes as proper to restrain our admiration, as it was before to give loose reins to it. It is only by having undergone this double ordeal that reputation can ever be established on a solid basis :—that popularity becomes fame.

We shall begin with his merits as an artist. There is one error which we wish to correct at setting out, because we think it important. There is not a greater or more unaccountable mistake than the supposition that Sir Joshua Reynolds owed his success or excellence in his profession to his having been the first who introduced into this country more general principles of the art, and who raised portrait-painting to the dignity of history from the low drudgery of copying the peculiarities, meannesses, and details of individual nature, which was all that had been attempted by his immediate predecessors. This is so far from being true, that the very reverse is the fact. If Sir Joshua did not give these details and peculiarities so much as might be wished, those that went before him did not give them at all. These pretended general principles of the art, which, it is said, “alone give value and dignity to it,” had been pushed to their extremest absurdity before his time ; and it was in getting rid of the mechanical systematic monotony and *middle forms*, by the help of which Lely, Kneller, Hudson, the French painters, and others, carried on their manufactories of face and history painting, and in returning (as far as he did) to the truth and force of individual nature, that the secret both of his fame and fortune lay. The pedantic, servile race of artists, which Reynolds superseded, had carried the abstract principle of improving on nature to such a degree of refinement, that they left it out altogether, and confounded all the varieties and irregularities of form, feature, character, expression or attitude in the same artificial mould of fancied grace and fashionable insipidity. The portraits of Kneller, for

example, seem all to have been turned in a machine, the eye-brows are arched as if by a compass, the mouth curled, and the chin dimpled, the head turned on one side, and the hands placed in the same affected position. He thought that beauty and perfection were *one*, and he very consistently reduced this principle to practice. The portraits of this mannerist, therefore, are as like one another as the dresses which were then in fashion, and have the same "dignity and value" as the full-bottomed wigs which they wore. The superiority of Reynolds consisted in his being varied and natural, instead of being artificial and uniform. The spirit, grace, or dignity which he added to his portraits, he borrowed from nature, and not from the ambiguous quackery of rules. His feeling of truth and nature was too strong to permit him to adopt the unmeaning style of Kneller and Hudson: but his logical acuteness was not such as to enable him to detect the verbal fallacies and speculative absurdities which he had learned from Richardson and Coppel; and from some defects in his own practice, he was led to confound negligence with grandeur. But of this hereafter.—

Sir Joshua Reynolds owed his vast superiority over his contemporaries to incessant practice and habitual attention to nature, to quick organic sensibility, to considerable power of observation, and still greater taste in perceiving and availing himself of the excellencies of others, which lay within his own walk of art. We can by no means look upon Sir Joshua as having a claim to the first rank of genius; his own account of genius is a sufficient proof of this, for every man, in reasoning on the faculties of human nature, describes the process of his own mind. He would hardly have been a great painter, if other greater painters had not lived before him. He would not have given a first impulse to the art, nor did he advance any part of it beyond the point where he found it. He did not present any new view of nature, nor is he to be placed in the

class with those who did ;—even in colour, his pallet was spread for him by the old masters, and his eye imbibed its full perception of depth, and harmony of tone, from the Dutch and Venetian schools, rather than from nature. His early pictures are poor and flimsy. He, indeed, learned to see the finer qualities of nature through the works of art, which he perhaps might never have discovered in nature itself. He became rich by the accumulation of borrowed wealth, and his genius was the offspring of taste. He combined and applied the materials of others to his own purpose with admirable success ; he was an industrious compiler, or skilful translator, not an original inventor in art. The art would remain in all its essential elements, just where it is, if Sir Joshua had never lived. He has supplied the industry of future plagiarists with no new materials. But it has been well observed, that the value of every work of art, as well as the genius of the artist, depends not more on the degree of excellence than on the degree of originality displayed in it. Sir Joshua, however, was perhaps the most original imitator that ever appeared in the world : and the reason of this in a great measure was, that he was compelled to combine what he saw in art with what he saw in nature, which was constantly before him. The portrait-painter is, in this respect, much less liable than the historical painter to deviate into the extremes of manner and affectation, for he cannot contrive to discard nature altogether, under the excuse that *she only puts him out*. He must meet her face to face : and if he is not incorrigible, he will see something there, that cannot fail to be of service to him. Another circumstance which must have been favourable to Sir Joshua was that, though not the originator in point of time, he was the first Englishman who translated the higher excellences of his profession into his own country, and had the merit, if not of an inventor, of a reformer of the art. His mode of painting had the graces of novelty

in the age and country in which he lived ; and he had therefore all the stimulus to exertion which arose from the enthusiastic applause of his contemporaries, and from a desire to expand and refine the taste of the public.

To an eye for colour and for effects of light and shade Sir Joshua united a strong perception of individual character, a lively feeling of the quaint and grotesque in expression, and great mastery of execution. He had comparatively little knowledge of drawing, either as it regarded proportion or form.* The beauty of some of his female faces and figures arises almost entirely from their softness and fleshiness. His pencil wanted energy and precision. The expression, even of his best portraits, is neither elevated nor refined : that is, implies neither lofty and impassioned intellect, nor delicate sensibility. He also wanted grace, if grace requires simplicity. The mere negation of stiffness and formality is not grace : for looseness and distortion are not grace. His favourite attitudes are not easy and natural, but the affectation of ease and nature. They are violent deviations from a right line. Many of the figures in his fancy-pieces are placed in postures in which they could not remain for an instant without extreme difficulty and awkwardness. We might instance the girl drawing with a pencil, and some

* This distinction has not been sufficiently attended to. Mr West, for example, has considerable knowledge of drawing, as it relates to proportion, to the anatomical measurements of the human body. He has not the least conception of elegance or grandeur of form. The one is matter of mechanical knowledge, the other of taste and feeling. Rubens was deficient in the anatomical measurements, as well as in the marking of the muscles ; but he had as fine an eye as possible for what may be called the *picturesque* in form, both in the composition of his figures and in the particular parts. In all that relates to the expression of motion, that is, to ease, freedom, and elasticity of form, he was unrivalled. He was as superior to Mr West in his power of drawing, as in his power of colouring.—Correggio's proportions are said to have been often incorrect : but his feeling of beauty and grace of outline were of the most exquisite kind.

others.* His portraits are his best pictures, and of these his portraits of men are the best ; his pictures of children are the next in value. He had fine subjects for the former, from the masculine sense and originality of character of many of the persons he painted, and he had also a great advantage (as far as practice went) in painting a number of persons of every rank and description. Some of the finest and most interesting are those of Dr Johnson, Goldsmith (which is too much a mere sketch), Baretti, Dr Burney, John Hunter, and the inimitable portrait of Bishop Newton. The elegant simplicity of character, expression and drawing, preserved throughout the picture, even to the attitude and mode of handling, discover the true genius of a painter. We also remember to have seen a print of Thomas Warton, than which nothing could be more characteristic or more natural. These were all Reynolds's intimate acquaintances, and it could not be said of them that they were men "of no mark or likelihood." Their traits had probably sunk deep into the artist's mind; he painted them as pure studies from nature, copying the real image existing before him, with all its peculiarities; and with as much wisdom as good-nature sacrificing the graces on the altar of friendship. They are downright portraits, and nothing more. What if he had painted them on the theory of middle forms, or pounded their features together in the same metaphysical mortar? Mr Westall might just as well have painted them. They would have been of no more value than his own picture of Mr Tomkins the penman, or Mrs Robinson, who is painted with a hat and feather, or Mrs Billington, who is painted as St Cecilia, or than the Prince of Wales and Duke of York, or the portraits of Sir George and Lady Beaumont. Would the artist in this case have conferred the same benefit on the public, or have added as much to the stock

* Our references are generally made to pictures in the late exhibition of Sir Joshua's works in the British gallery.

of our ideas, as by giving us *fac-similes* of the most interesting characters of the time, with whom we seem, from his representations of them, to be almost as well acquainted as if we had known them, and to remember their persons as well as their writings? Yet we would rather have seen Johnson, or Goldsmith, or Burke, than their portraits. This shows that the effect of pictures would not have been the worse, if they had been the more finished and more detailed : for there is nothing so true, either to the details or to the general effect, as nature. The only celebrated person of this period whom we have seen, is Mr Sheridan, whose face, we have no hesitation in saying, contains a great deal more, and is better worth seeing, than Sir Joshua's picture of him. In his portraits of women, on the contrary (with very few exceptions), Sir Joshua appears to have consulted either the vanity of his employers or his own fanciful theory. They have not the look of individual nature, nor have they, to compensate the want of this, either peculiar elegance of form, refinement of expression, delicacy of complexion, or gracefulness of manner. Vandyck's attitudes have been complained of as stiff and confined. But there is a medium between primness and hoydening. Reynolds, to avoid the former defect, has fallen into the contrary extreme of negligence and contortion. All his figures, which aim at gentility, are twisted into that serpentine line, the idea of which he ridiculed so much in Hogarth. Indeed, Sir Joshua, in his Discourses, (see his account of Correggio,) speaks of grace as if it were nearly allied to affectation. Grace signifies that which is pleasing and natural in the position and motions of the human form, as beauty is more properly applied to the form itself. That which is inanimate and without motion cannot therefore be graceful ; but to suppose that a figure to be graceful needs only to be put in some languishing, sprawling, or extravagant posture, is to mistake flutter and affectation for ease

and elegance. Sir Joshua seems more than once—both theoretically and practically—to have borrowed his idea of positive excellence from a negation of the opposite defect. His tastes led him to reject the faults which he had observed in others; but he had not always power to realize his own idea of perfection, or to ascertain precisely in what it consisted. His colouring, also, wanted that purity, delicacy, and transparent smoothness, which give such an exquisite charm to Vandyck's women. Vandyck's portraits—mostly of English women—in the Louvre have a cool, refreshing air about them—a look of simplicity and modesty even in the very tone, which forms a fine contrast to the voluptuous glow and mellow golden lustre of Titian's Italian women. There is a quality of flesh-colour in Vandyck which is to be found in no other painter, neither in Titian, Rubens, nor Rembrandt; nor is it in Reynolds, for he had nothing which was not taken from those three. It exactly conveys the idea of the soft, smooth, sliding, continuous, delicately-varied surface of the skin. Correggio approached nearer to it, though his principle of light and shade was totally different. The objects in Vandyck have the least possible difference of light and shade, and are presented to the eye without being reflected through any other medium. It is this extreme purity and clearness of tone, together with the elegance and precision of his particular forms, * that places Vandyck in the first rank of portrait-painters. As Reynolds had not his defects, he had not his excellences. We accidentally saw the late Lady Mountjoy at the exhibition of Sir Joshua's works in Pall-mall: nor could we help contrasting the dazzling clearness of complexion, the delicacy and distinctness of the form of the features, with the half made-up and faded beauties which hung on the walls, and which comparatively resembled paste figures smeared over with paint. We doubt

* Mengs speak feelingly of "the little varieties of form in the details of the portraits of Vandyck."

whether the same effect would have been produced in a fine collection of Vandycks. In the gallery of Blenheim, there is a family picture of the Duchess of Buckingham with her children, which is a pure mirror of fashion. The picture produces the same sort of respect and silence as if the spectator had been introduced into a family circle of the highest rank, at a period when rank was a greater distinction than it is at present. The delicate attention and mild solicitude of the mother are admirable, but two of the children surpass description. The one is a young girl of nine or ten, who looks as if "the winds of heaven had not been permitted to visit her face too roughly." She stands before her mother in all the pride of childish self-importance and studied display of artificial prettinesses with a consciousness that the least departure from strict propriety or decorum will be instantly detected. The other is a little round-faced chubby boy, who stands quite at his ease behind his mother's chair, with a fine rosy glow of health in his cheeks, through which the blood is seen circulating. It was like seeing the objects reflected in a glass. The picture of the late Duke and Duchess of Marlborough and their children, in the same room, painted by Sir Joshua, appear coarse and tawdry when compared with "the soft precision of the clear Vandyck."*

Sir Joshua's children are among his *chefs-d'œuvre*. The faces of children have, in general, that want of precision of outline, that prominence of relief, and strong contrast of colour, which were peculiarly adapted to his style of painting. The arch simplicity of expression, and the grotesque character which he has given to the heads of his children, were, however, borrowed from Correggio. Sir Joshua has only repeated the same idea *ad infinitum*, and has, besides, caricatured it. It has been said that his children were unrivalled. Titian's, Raphael's, and Correggio's were much

* The large picture of the Pembroke family at Wilton is a finer commentary on the age of chivalry than Mr Burke's *Reflections*.

superior. Those of Rubens and Poussin were at least equal. If any one should hesitate as to the last painter in particular, we would refer them to the picture (at Lord Grosvenor's) of the children paying adoration to the infant Christ, or to the children drinking, in the picture of Moses striking the rock. Our making these comparisons or giving these preferences is not, we conceive, any disparagement to Sir Joshua. Did we not think highly of him, we might well blush to make them. His Puck and the single figure of the infant Hercules are his best. The colour and execution are most masterly in both, and the character is no less admirably preserved. Many of those to which his friends have suggested historical nick-names, and stood poetical god-fathers and god-mothers, are mere common portraits or casual studies. Thus we cannot agree with Mr Sotheby in his description of the infant Jupiter and the infant Samuel. The one is a sturdy young gentleman sitting in a doubtful posture without its swaddling-clothes, and the other is an innocent little child, saying its prayers at the foot of the bed. They have nothing to do with Jupiter or Samuel, the heathen god or the Hebrew prophet.* The same objection will apply to many of his fancy-pieces and historical compositions. There is often no connection between the picture and the subject but the name. Sir Joshua himself (as it appears from his biographers) had no idea of a subject in painting them, till some ignorant and officious admirer undertook to supply the deficiency. What can be more trifling than giving the portrait of Kitty Fisher the mock heroic title of Cleopatra? Even the

* Where boundless genius brooding o'er the whole,
Stamps e'en on babes sublimity of soul,
Whether, while terror crowns Jove's infant brow,
Before the godhead awed Olympus bow;
Or while from heav'n celestial grace descends,
Meek on his knees the infant Samuel bends,
Lifts his clasp'd hands, and as he glows in prayer,
Fixes in awful trance his eye on air.

Mr Sotheby's Poetical Epistle to Sir G. Beaumont.

celebrated Iphigenia, beautiful as she is, and prodigal of her charms, does not answer to the idea of the story. In drawing the naked figure, Sir Joshua's want of truth and firmness of outline became more apparent; and his mode of laying on his colours, which in the face and extremities was relieved and broken by the abrupt inequalities of surface and variety of tints in each part, produced heaviness and opacity in the larger masses of flesh-colour, which can indeed only be avoided by extreme delicacy or extreme lightness of execution.

Shall we speak the truth at once? In our opinion Sir Joshua was not a man either of high imagination or strong feelings; and without both no painter can become a poet. His larger historical compositions have been generally allowed to be most liable to objection, considered in a critical point of view. We shall not attempt to judge them by scientific or technical rules, which seldom prove anything in works of art, but make one or two observations on the character and feeling displayed in them. The highest subject which Sir Joshua has attempted was the Count Ugolino, and it was, as might be expected from the circumstances, a total failure. He had, it seems, painted a study of an old beggar-man's head, and some person, who must have known as much of painting as of poetry, persuaded the unsuspecting artist that it was the exact expression of Dante's Count Ugolino, one of the most grand, terrific, and appalling characters in modern history. Reynolds, who knew nothing of the matter but what he was told, took his good fortune for granted, and only extended his canvas to admit the other figures, who look very much like apprentices hired to sit for the occasion from some neighbouring workshop. There is one pleasing and natural figure of a little boy kneeling at his father's feet, but it has no relation to the supposed story. The figure and expression of Count Ugolino himself are what the artist intended them to be, till they were pampered up into

something else by the ridiculous vanity of friends, those of a common mendicant at the corner of a street, waiting patiently for some charitable donation. There is all the difference between what the picture is and what it ought to be, that there is between Crabbe and Dante. The imagination of the painter took refuge in a parish work-house, instead of ascending the steps of the Tower of Famine. The hero of Dante is a lofty, high-minded, and unprincipled Italian nobleman; who has betrayed his country to the enemy, and who, as a punishment for his crime, is shut up with his four sons in the dungeon of the citadel, where he shortly finds the doors barred against him, and food withheld. He in vain watches with eager feverish eye the opening of the door at the accustomed hour, and his looks turn to stone: his children, one by one, drop down dead at his feet; he is seized with blindness, and in the agony of despair, he gropes on his knees after them,

“Calling each by name

“For three days after they were dead.”

Even in the other world he is represented with the same fierce, dauntless, unrelenting character, “gnawing the skull of his adversary, his fell repast.” The subject of the Laocoon is not equal to that described by Dante. The horror there is physical and momentary; in the other the imagination fills up the long, obscure, dreary void of despair, and joins its unutterable pangs to the loud cries of nature. What is there in the picture to convey the ghastly horrors of the scene, or the mighty energy of soul with which they are borne? Nothing! Yet Dr Warton, who has related this story so well; Burke, who wrote that fine description of the effects of famine; Goldsmith, and all his other friends, were satisfied with his success. Why, then, should not Sir Joshua be so too? Because he was bound to understand the language which he used, as well as that which was given him to translate.

The "Cardinal Beaufort" is a fine display of rich and mellow colouring; and there is something gentlemanly and Shakespearian in the king and the noblemen who attend him. At the same time, we think the expression of the Cardinal himself is too much one of physical horror, a canine gnashing of the teeth, like the picture of a man strangled. This is not, we conceive, true history. The picture of Macbeth is full of wild and grotesque images; and the apparatus of the witches contains a very elaborate and well-arranged inventory of dreadful objects. The idea of Macbeth seems to be taken from the passage in Shakespeare, "Why stands Macbeth thus amazedly?" The poet has, in this taunting question of the witches, laid open the inmost movements of his mind. Why has the painter turned his face from us? "Garrick between tragedy and comedy" is, to say the best, a very indifferent performance. He appears to be "grinning for a wager." We cannot conceive how any two ladies should contend for such a prize, nor how he should be divided between them. The muse of comedy is as childish and insipid as the muse of tragedy is cold and repulsive. The whole is mere affectation without an idea. Mrs Siddons, as the tragic muse, is an improvement on the same false style. It is not Mrs Siddons, nor is it the tragic muse, but something between both, and neither. We would ask those who pretend to admire this composition, whether they think it would convey to anyone who had never seen the original, the least idea of the power of that wonderful actress in any one of her characters, and as it relates to the expression of countenance alone? That it gives an idea of anything finer, is what we cannot readily make up our minds to. We ought, perhaps, in fairness to close these remarks with a confession of our weakness. There was one picture which affected us more than all the rest, because it seemed to convey the true feeling of the story, and that was the picture of the "Children in the Wood."

To return once more to Sir Joshua's general character as a painter. He has been compared to Raphael, Titian, Rubens, Vandyck, Rembrandt, and Correggio, and said to unite all their excellences. It will be well to qualify this praise. He had little congeniality of mind, except with the two last, more particularly Rembrandt. Of Raphael, it is needless to say anything. He had very little of Titian's manner, except, perhaps, a greater breadth and uniform richness of colour than he would have acquired from Rembrandt. He had none of the dignity or animation of Titian's portraits. It is not speaking too highly of the portraits of Titian to say that they have as much expression, that is, convey as fine an idea of intellect and feeling, as the historical heads of Raphael. The difference seems to be only, that the expression in Raphael is more contemplative and philosophical, and in Titian more personal and constitutional. In the portraits of the latter, the Italian character always predominates; there is a look of piercing sagacity, of commanding intellect, of acute sensibility, which it would be in vain to expect to find in English portraits. The daring spirit and irritable passions of the age and country are as distinctly stamped upon the countenances, and can be as little mistaken as the costume which they wear. Many of them look as if it would be hardly safe to be left in the room with them, so completely do they convey the idea of superiority.* The portraits of

* A young artist of the name of Day, in company with Mr Northcote and another student, taking leave of some pictures of Titian in a gallery at Naples, said, with tears in his eyes, "Ah! he was a fine old monster!" This contains more true feeling than volumes of poetical criticism. Mr Northcote has himself given a striking description of Titian in his elegant allegory called "The Painter's Dream," at the end of his life of Sir Joshua. It is worth remarking that, notwithstanding the delicacy and ingenuity with which he has contrived to vary the characters of all the other painters, yet when he comes to his favourite modern, he can only repeat the same images which he has before applied to Correggio and others, of wanton Cupids and attendant Graces.

Raphael, though full of profound thought and character, have more of common humanity about them. Of Vandyck, as we have observed before, Sir Joshua had neither the excellences nor the defects. Some years ago we saw his picture of the Marquis of Granby, and Vandyck's picture of Charles I. (engraved by Strange), standing by one another in the Louvre. The difference was striking. The portrait of the nobleman looked heavy and muddled, from the mode of heaping on the colours ; and the determination to produce effect alone without attention to the subordinate details defeated itself. The portrait of the unfortunate monarch, on the contrary, displayed the utmost delicacy and facility of execution. Every part would bear the nicest inspection, and yet the whole composition,—the monarch, the figure of the horse, and the attendants,—had all the distinctness, lightness, and transparency of objects seen in the open air. There are some persons who will still prefer the former mode of execution as more bold and dashing. For the same reason we might prefer the copies of the head of the Marquis of Granby, which we so often see in conspicuous situations in the vicinity of the metropolis, to the original.

Of Rubens our admired countryman had neither the facility nor brilliancy. He was crude and heavy both in drawing and colour, compared with the Flemish painter. Rembrandt was the painter of all others whom Sir Joshua most resembled, and from whom he borrowed most. Strong masses of light and shade, harmony and clearness of tone, the production of effect by masterly, broad, and rapid execution, were in general the *forte* of both these painters. Rembrandt had the priority in the order of time, and also in power of hand and eye. There are no pictures of Reynolds's which will stand against the best of Rembrandt's for striking effect and an intense feeling of nature. They are faint, slovenly, dingy, and commonplace in comparison. Rembrandt had even greater versa-

tility of genius. He had an eye for all objects as far as he had seen them. His history and landscapes are equally fine in their way. He might be said to have created a style of his own, which he also perfected. In fact, he is one of the great founders and legislators of art. Of Correggio Reynolds borrowed little but the air of some of his female heads and the models of his children, which he injudiciously overloaded with the massy light and shade of Rembrandt, instead of the tender *chiaroscuro* of Correggio, the only colouring proper for that kind of soft, undulating, retiring line of beauty. We shall sum up our opinion by saying that we do not find in the works of Sir Joshua either the majesty and power, the delicacy and refinement, the luxurious splendour and dazzling invention, or the same originality of conception, and perfect execution, which are to be found in the greatest painters. Nevertheless, his works did honour to his art and to his country.*

* Compare *Certain Inconsistencies in Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses*, printed in *Table Talk*, new edition, p. 166.—ED.

ON THE CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ OF THE BRITISH INSTITUTION.

WE will lay any odds that this is a fellow "damned in a fair face;" with white eyes and eyebrows; of the colour of a Shrewsbury cake; a smooth tallow-skinned rascal, a white German sausage, a well-fed chitterling, from whose face Madame de Staël would have turned away in disgust,—a transcendental stuffed man! We have no patience that the arts should be catechised by a piece of whit-leather, a whey face, who thinks that pictures, like the moon, should be made of green cheese! Shall a roll of double tripe rise up in judgment on grace; shall a piece of dough talk of feeling? 'Tis too much. 'Sdeath, for Rembrandt to be demanded of a cheese-curd, what replication should he make? What might Vandyck answer to a jack-pudding, whose fingers are of a thickness at both ends? What should Rubens say, who "lived in the rainbow, and played i' th' plighted clouds," to a swaddling cloak, a piece of stockinet, of fleecy hosiery, to a squab man, without a bend in his body? What might Raffaele answer to a joint-stool? or Nicholas Poussin, charged in the presence of his "Cephalus and Aurora" with being a mere pedant, without grace or feeling, to this round-about machine of formal impertinence, this lumbering go-cart of dulness and spite? We could have wished that as the fellow stood before the portrait of Rembrandt, chattering like an ape, making mocks and mows at it, the picture had lifted up its *great grimy fist*, and knocked him down.

The "Catalogue Raisonné" of the British Institution is

* From the *Examiner* newspaper, 1816. The passages in the extraordinary lucubration commented on, which more especially gave rise to the present criticism, will be found in the course of the paper.

only worth notice, as it is pretty generally understood to be a declaration of the views of the Royal Academy. It is a very dull, gross, impudent attack by one of its toad-eaters on human genius, on permanent reputation, and on liberal art. What does it say? Why, in so many words, that the knowledge of art in this country is inconsistent with the existence of the Academy, and that their success as a body of men instituted for promoting and encouraging the Fine Arts, requires the destruction or concealment of all works of art of great and acknowledged excellence. In this they may be right; but we did not think they would have come forward to say so themselves; or that they would get a fellow, a low buffoon, a wretched Merry Andrew, a practical St Giles's joker, a dirty Grub Street critic, to vent his abominations on the *chefs-d'œuvre* produced by the greatest painters that have gone before them, to glare at them with his bleared eyes, to smear the filth and ordure of his tongue upon them, to spit at them, to point at them, to nickname them, to hoot at them, to make mouths at them, to shrug up his shoulders and run away from them, like a blackguard who affects to make a bugbear of every one he meets in the street; to play over again, in the presence of these divine guests, the nauseous tricks of one of Swift's Yahoos. And for what? Avowedly for the purpose of diverting the public mind from the contemplation of all that genius and art can boast in the lapse of ages, and to persuade the world that there is nothing in art that has been or ever will be produced, worth looking at, but the gilt frames and red curtains at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. We knew before that they had no great genius for the arts, but we thought they might have some love of them in their hearts. They here avow their rankling jealousy, hatred, and scorn, of all art, and of all the great names in art, and as a bold push indeed, require the keeping down of the public taste, as the only means of keeping up the bubble of their reputation. They insist that their only hope of continued

encouragement and support with a discerning public is in hood-winking that public, in confining their highest notions of art to their own gross and superficial style of daubing, and in vilifying all works of standard genius. This is right English. The English are a shop-keeping nation, and the Royal Academy are a society of hucksters in the Fine Arts, who are more tenacious of their profits as chapmen and dealers, than of the honour of the art. The day after the "*Catalogue Raisonné*" was published, the Prince Regent, in the name and on behalf of his father, should have directed it to be burned by the hands of the hangman of their committee, or, upon refusal, have shut up their shop. A society for the encouragement and promotion of art has no right to exist at all, from the moment that it proposes to exist only in wrong of art, by the suppression of the knowledge of art,—in contempt of genius in art,—in defiance of all manly and liberal sentiment in art. But this is what the Royal Academy proposes to do in the "*Catalogue Raisonné*."

The Academy from its commencement and up to the present hour is, in fact, a mercantile body, like any other mercantile body, consisting chiefly of manufacturers of portraits, who have got a regular monopoly of this branch of trade with a certain rank, style, and title of their own, that is, with the king's privilege to be thought Artists and men of genius, and who, with the jealousy natural to such bodies, supported by authority from without and by cabal within, think themselves bound to crush all generous views and liberal principles of art, lest they should interfere with their monopoly and their privilege to be thought Artists and men of genius. The Academy is the royal road to art. The whole style of English Art, as issuing from this Academy, is founded on a principle of appeal to the personal vanity and ignorance of their sitters, and of accommodation to the lucrative pursuits of the painter, in a sweeping attention to effect in painting, by which means he can

cover so many more whole or half-lengths in each season. The artists have not time to finish their pictures, or if they had, the effect would be lost in the superficial glare of that hot room, where nothing but rouged cheeks, naked shoulders, and Ackermann's dresses for May, can catch the eye in the crowd and bustle and rapid succession of meretricious attractions, as they do in another hot room of the same equivocal description. Yet they complain, in one part of the Catalogue, that "they (the Academicians) are forced to come into a hasty competition every year with works that have stood the test of ages." It is for that very reason, among others, that it was proper to exhibit the works at the British Institution, to show to the public, and by that means to make the Academicians feel, that the securing the applause of posterity and a real rank in the art, which that alone can give, depended on the number of pictures they finished, and not on the number they began. It is this which excites the apprehensions of the cabal; for if the eye of the public should be once spoiled by the Old Masters, the necessity of doing something like them might considerably baulk the regularity of their returns. Why should they complain of being forced into this premature competition? Who forces them to bring forward so many pictures yearly before they are fit to be seen? Would they have taken more pains, more time to finish them, to work them up to that fastidious standard of perfection on which they have set their minds, if they had not been hurried into this unfair competition with the British Institution, "sent to their account with all their imperfections on their heads, unhouselled, unanointed, unanointed!" Would they have done a single stroke more to any one picture, if the Institution had never been opened? No such thing. It is not, then, true that this new and alarming competition prevents them from finishing their works; but it prevents them from imposing them on the public as finished. *Pingo in eternitatem* is not their

motto. There are three things which constitute the art of painting, which make it interesting to the public, which give it permanence and rank among the efforts of human genius. They are, first, *gusto* or expression: *i. e.*, the conveying to the eye the impressions of the soul, or the other senses connected with the sense of sight, such as the different passions visible in the countenance, the romantic interest connected with scenes of nature, the character and feelings associated with different objects. In this, the highest and first part of art, the Italian painters, particularly Raffaele, Correggio, &c., excel. The second is the picturesque: that is, the seizing on those objects, or situations and accidents of objects, as light and shade, &c., which make them most striking to the mind as objects of sight only. This is the *forte* of the Flemish and Venetian painters, Titian, Paul Veronese, Rubens, Vandyck, Rembrandt; and they have carried this part of the art as high as it can go, some of them with more, some of them with less, of the former excellence. The third is the exact and laborious imitation of natural objects, such as they exist in their component parts, with every variety and nicety of detail, the pencil performing the part of a microscope, and there being no necessity for expression or the picturesque in the object represented, or anything but truth in the representation. In this least interesting, but still curious and ingenious part of the art, the Dutch School have been allowed to excel, though with little of the former qualities, which, indeed, are not very much wanted for this purpose. Now in all these three the English School are notoriously deficient, and they are so for these following reasons:—

They cannot paint *gusto*, or high expression, for it is not in the national character. At least, it must be sought in nature; but our painters do not go out of their way in search of character and expression—their sitters come to them in crowds; and they come to them, not to be painted

in all the truth of character and expression, but to be flattered out of all meaning, or they would no longer come in crowds. To please generally, the painter must exaggerate what is generally pleasing, obvious to all capacities, and void of offence before God and man, the showy—the superficial, and the insipid, that which strikes the greatest number of persons with the least effort of thought : and he must suppress all the rest ; all that might be “ to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness.” The Exhibition is a successful experiment on the ignorance and credulity of the town. They collect “ a quantity of barren spectators ” to judge of art in their corporate and public capacity, and then each makes the best market he can of them in his own. A Royal Academician must not “ hold the mirror up to nature,” but make his canvas “ the glass of fashion and the mould of form.” The “ numbers without number ” who pay thirty, forty, fifty, or a hundred guineas for their pictures in large, expect their faces to come out of the painter’s hands smooth, rosy, round, smiling ; just as they expect their hair to come out of the barber’s curled and powdered. It would be a breach of contract to proceed in any other way. A fashionable artist and a fashionable hairdresser have the same common principles of theory and practice ; the one fits his customers to appear with *éclat* in a ball room, the other in the Great Room of the Royal Academy. A certain dexterity, and a knowledge of the prevailing fashion, are all that is necessary to either. An Exhibition portrait is, therefore, an essence, not of character, but of commonplace. It displays, not high thought and fine feeling, but physical well-being, with an outside label of health, ease, and competence. Yet the Catalogue-writer talks of the dignity of modern portrait ! To enter into a general obligation to paint the passions or characters of men, must, where there are none, be difficult to the artist ; where they are bad, be disagreeable to his employers. When Sir Thomas Lawrence painted Lord Castlereagh some

time ago, he did not try to exhibit his character, out of complaisance to his Lordship, nor his understanding, out of regard to himself; but he painted him in a fashionable coat, with his hair dressed in the fashion, in a genteel posture like one of his footmen, and with the prim, smirking aspect of a haberdasher. There was nothing of the noble *disinvoltura* of his Lordship's manner, the grand contour of his features, the profundity of design hid under an appearance of indifference, the traces of the Irish patriot or the English statesman. It would have puzzled Lavater or Spurzheim to have discovered there the author of the letter to *Mon Prince*. Tacitus had drawn him before in a different style, and perhaps Sir Thomas despaired of rivalling this great master in his own way. Yet the picture pleased, and Mr Perry, of the *Chronicle*, swore to the likeness, though he had been warned to the contrary. Now, if this picture had erred on the side of the characteristic expression as much as it did on that of mannered insignificance, how it must have shocked all parties in the State! An insipid misrepresentation was safer than a disagreeable reality. In the glosses of modern art, as in the modern refinement of law, it is the truth that makes the libel. Again, the picturesque is necessarily banished from the painting rooms of the Academicians, and from the Great Room of the Academy. People of fashion go to be painted because other people do, and they wish to look like other people. We never remember to have seen a memorable head in the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. Anything that had the singular or striking in it would look quite monstrous there, and would be stared out of countenance. Anything extraordinary or original in nature is inadmissible in modern art; anything that would strike the eye, or that you would ever think of again, would be a violation of decorum—an infringement of professional etiquette, and would disturb the uniform and well-arranged monotony of the walls of the Exhibition "with most admired disorder." A man of any originality

of mind, if he has also the least common sense, soon finds his error, and reforms. At Rome one must do as the people of Rome do. The Academy is not the place for the eccentricities of genius. The persons of rank and opulence, who wish to have their pictures exhibited, do not wish to be exhibited as objects of natural history, as extraordinary phenomena in art or nature, in the moral or intellectual world ; and in this they are right. Neither do they wish to volunteer their own persons, which they hold in due reverence, though there is nothing at all in them, as subjects for the painter to exercise his skill upon, as studies of light and shade, as merely objects of sight, as something curious and worth seeing from the outward accidents of nature. They do not like to share their triumph with nature, to sink their persons in "her glorious light." They owe no allegiance to the elements. They wish to be painted as Mr and Mrs Such-a-one, not as studies of light and shade ; they wish to be represented as complete abstractions of persons and property : to have one side of the face seen as much as the other ; to have their coat, waistcoat, and breeches, their muslin dresses, silks, sofas, and settees, their dogs and horses, their house furniture, painted ; to have themselves and all that belongs to them, and nothing else, painted. The picture is made for them, and not they for the picture. Hence there can be nothing but the vapid, trite, and mechanical, in professional art. Professional art is a contradiction in terms. Art is genius, and genius cannot belong to a profession. Our painters' galleries are not studies, but lounging show-rooms. Would a booby with a star wish it to be painted (think you) with a view to its effect in the picture, or would he not have it seen at all events, and as much as possible ? The Catalogue-writer wishes the gentlemen-sitters of the Royal Academy to go and look at Rembrandt's portraits, and to ask themselves, their wives, and daughters, whether they would like to be painted in the same way ? No, truly. This, we confess,

is hard upon our Artists, to have to look upon splendour, and on obscurity more splendid, which they dare not even attempt to imitate ; to see themselves condemned by the refinement of taste and progress of civilisation, to smear rouge and white paste on the faces and necks of their portraits for ever ; and still “to let I dare not wait upon I would, like the poor cat in the adage.” But why then complain of the injury they would sustain by the restoration of the Art (if it were possible) into the original wardship of nature and genius, when “service sweats for duty, not for meed.” Sir Joshua made a shift to combine some of Rembrandt’s art with his portraits, only by getting the start of public affectation, and by having the lead in his profession. so that, like the early painters, he could assert the independence of his own taste and judgment. The modern makers of catalogues would have driven him and his *chiaroscuro* into the shade presently. The critic professes to admire Sir Joshua, though all his excellencies are Gothic, palpably borrowed from the Old Masters. But he is wrong or inconsistent in everything.—The imitation of the details of nature is not compatible with the professional avarice of the painter, as the two former essentials of the art are inconsistent with the vanity and ignorance of his employer. “This, this is the unkindest cut of all.” It is that in which the understanding of the multitude is most likely to conspire with the painter’s “own gained knowledge” to make him dissatisfied with his disproportioned profits. The Dutch masters are instructive enough in this way, and show the value of detail by showing the value of art, where there is nothing else but this. But this is not all. It might be pretended by our wholesale manufacturers of *chefs-d’œuvre* in the Fine Arts that so much nicety of execution is useless or improper in works of high gusto and grand effect. It happens unfortunately, however, that the works of the greatest gusto and most picturesque effect have this fidelity of imitation often in the

highest degree (as in Raffaele, Titian, and Rembrandt), generally in a very high degree (as in Rubens and Paul Veronese), so that the moderns gain nothing by this pretext. This is a serious loss of time or reputation to them. To paint a hand like Vandyck would cost them as much time as a dozen half-lengths, and they could not do it after all. To paint an eye like Titian would cost them their whole year's labour, and they would lose their time and their labour into the bargain. Or to take Claude's landscapes as an example in this respect, as they are in almost all others: if Turner, whom, with the Catalogue-writer, we allow—most heartily allow—to be the greatest landscape-painter of the age, were to finish his trees or his plants in the foreground, or his distances, or his middle distances, or his sky, or his water, or his buildings, or anything in his pictures, in like manner, he could only paint and sell one landscape where he now paints and sells twenty. This would be a clear loss to the artist of pounds, shillings, and pence, and “that's a feeling disputation.” He would have to put twenty times as much of everything into a picture as he now does, and that is what (if he is like other persons who have got into bad habits) he would be neither able nor willing to do. It was a common cant, a short time ago, to pretend of him, as it formerly was of Wilson, that he had other things which Claude had not, and that which Claude had, besides, only impaired the grandeur of his pictures. The public have seen to the contrary. They see the quackery of painting trees blue and yellow to produce the effect of green at a distance. They see the affectation of despising the mechanism of the art, and never thinking about anything but the mechanism. They see that it is not true in art that a part is greater than the whole, or that the means are destructive of the end. They see that a daub, however masterly, cannot vie with the perfect landscapes of the accomplished Claude. “To some men their graces serve them but as enemies,” and it was so till the other day with

Claude. If it had been only for opening the eyes of the public on this subject, the Institution would have deserved well of the art and their country.

The Catalogue sets out with the following passages :—

“ The first resolution ever framed by the noblemen and gentlemen who met to establish the British Institution consists of the following sentence, viz. :—

“ ‘ The object of the establishment is to facilitate by a public exhibition the sale of the productions of British Artists.’

“ Now if the Directors had not felt quite certain as to the result of the present exhibition (of the Flemish School), if they had not perfectly satisfied themselves that, instead of affording any, even the least, means of promoting unfair and invidious comparisons, it would produce abundant matter for exultation to the British Artist, can we possibly imagine they, the foster-parents of British Art, would ever have suffered such a display to have taken place? Certainly not. If they had not foreseen and fully provided against all such injurious results by the deep and masterly manœuvre alluded to in our former remarks, is it conceivable that the Directors would have acted in a way so counter, so diametrically in opposition to this their fundamental and leading principle? No, no! It is a position which all sense of respect for their consistency will not suffer us to admit, which all feelings of respect for their views forbid us to allow.

“ Is it at all to be wondered at that, in an exhibition such as this, when nothing but a patriotic desire to uphold the arts of their country can possibly have place in the mind of the Directors, that we should attribute to them the desire of holding up the Old Masters to derision in as much as good policy would allow? Is it to be wondered at that, when the Directors have the three-fold prospect, by so doing, of estranging the silly and ignorant collector from his false and senseless infatuation for the

Black Masters, of turning his unjust preference from foreign to British Art, and by affording the living painters a just encouragement, teach them to feel that becoming confidence in their powers which an acknowledgment of their merits entitles them to ; is it to be wondered at, we say, that a little duplicity should have been practised upon this occasion, that some of our ill-advised collectors and second-rate picture amateurs should have been singled out as sheep for the sacrifice, and thus ingeniously made to pay unwilling homage to the talents of their countrymen, through that very medium by which they had previously been induced to depreciate them ?

“If in our wish to please the Directors we should without mercy damn all that deserve damning, and effectually hide our admiration for those pieces and passages which are truly entitled to admiration, it must be placed entirely to that patriotic sympathy, which we feel in common with the Directors, of holding up to the public, as the first and great object, THE PATRONAGE OF MODERN ART.”

Once more :—

“Who does not perceive (except those whose eyes are not made for seeing more than they are told by others) that Vandyck’s portraits, by the brilliant colour of the velvet hangings, are made to look as if they had been newly fetched home from the clear-starcher, with a double portion of blue in their ruffs ? Who does not see that the angelic females in Rubens’ pictures (particularly in that of the ‘Brazen Serpent’) labour under a fit of the bile, twice as severe as they would do if they were not suffering on red velvet ? Who does not see, from the same cause, that the landscapes of the same Master are converted into brown studies, and that Rembrandt’s ladies and gentlemen of fashion look as if they had been on duty for the whole of last week in the Prince Regent’s new

sewer? And who 'that has any penetration, that has any gratitude, does not see, in seeing all this, the anxious and benevolent solicitude of the Directors to keep the Old Masters under?"

So then the writer would think it a matter of lively gratitude and of exultation in the breasts of living Artists, if the Directors, "in their anxious and benevolent desire to keep the Old Masters under," had contrived to make Vandyck's pictures look like starch and blue; if they had converted Rubens' pictures into brown studies, or a fit of the bile; or had dragged Rembrandt's through the Prince Regent's new sewers. It would have been a great gain, a great triumph to the Academy and to the art, to have nothing left of all the pleasure or admiration which those painters had hitherto imparted to the world, to find all the excellences which their works had been supposed to possess, and all respect for them in the minds of the public destroyed, and converted into sudden loathing and disgust. This is, according to the Catalogue-writer and his friends, a consummation devoutly to be wished for themselves and for the art. All that is taken from the Old Masters is so much added to the moderns; the marring of art is the making of the Academy. He would have the Directors keep the Old Masters under, by playing off upon them the same tricks of background, situation, &c., which they played off upon one another's pictures so successfully at the Academy Great Room.* This is the kind of patron-

* The Academicians, having out-done nature at home, wait till their pictures are hung up at the Academy to out-do one another. When they know their exact situation in the Great Room, they set to work with double diligence to paint up to their next neighbours, and to keep them under. Sometimes they leave nearly the whole unfinished, that they may have a more *ad libitum* opportunity of annoying their friends and of shining at their expense. — had placed a landscape, consisting of one enormous sheet of white lead, like the clean white napkin depending from the chin to the knees of the Saturday night's customers in a barber's shop, under a whole-length of a lady by —, in a white chalk dress, which made his Cleopatra look like a

age and promotion of the Fine Arts on which he insists as necessary to keep up the reputation of living Artists and to ensure the sale of their works. There is nothing, then, in common between the merits of the Old Masters and the doubtful claims of the New; those are not the scale by which we can ascend to the love of these. The excellences of the latter are of their own making and of their own seeing: we must take their own word for them; and not only so, but we must sacrifice all established principles and all established reputation to their upstart pretensions, because, if the old pictures are not totally worthless, their own can be good for nothing. The only chance, therefore, for the modern, if the Catalogue-writer is to be believed, is to decry all the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the art, and to hold up all the great names in it to derision. If the public once get to relish the style of the Old Masters, they will no longer tolerate the New. But so long as the Old Masters can be kept under, the coloured caricatures of the moderns, like Mrs Peachum's coloured handkerchiefs, "will be of sure sale at their warehouse at Redriff." The Catalogue-writer thinks it necessary, in order to raise the art in this country, to depreciate all art in all other times and countries. He thinks that the way to excite an enthusiastic admiration of genius in the public is by setting the example of a vulgar and malignant hatred of it in himself. He thinks to inspire a lofty spirit of emulation in the rising generation by shutting his eyes to the excellences of all the finest models, or by pouring out upon them the over-

dowly. Our little lively knight of the brush goes me round the room, crying out, "Who has any vermilion, who has any Indian yellow?" and presently returning, and by making his whole-length one red and yellow dach, like the drop curtain at Covent Garden, makes the poor Academician's landscape look pale as his shirt. Such is the history of modern art. It is no wonder that "these fellows, who thus *clendo Termagant*," should look with horror at the sobriety of ancient art. It is no wonder that they carry their contempt, hatred, and jealousy of one another into the art itself.

flowings of his gall and envy, to disfigure them in the eyes of others, so that they may see nothing in Raffaele, in Titian, in Rubens, in Rembrandt, in Vandyck, in Claude Lorraine, in Leonardo da Vinci, but the low wit and dirty imagination of a paltry scribbler, and come away from the greatest monuments of human capacity without one feeling of excellence in art, or of beauty and grandeur in nature. Nay, he would persuade us that this is a great public and private benefit—that there is no such thing as excellence, as genius, as true fame, except what he and his anonymous associates arrogate to themselves with all the profit and credit of this degradation of genius, this ruin of art, this obloquy and contempt heaped on great and unrivalled reputation. He thinks it a likely mode of producing confidence in the existence and value of art to prove that there never was any such thing till the last annual Exhibition of the Royal Academy. He would encourage a disinterested love of art, and a liberal patronage of it in the great and opulent, by showing that the living Artists have no regard, but the most sovereign and reckless contempt, for it, except as it can be made a temporary stalking-horse to their pride and avarice. The writer may have a patriotic sympathy with the sale of modern works of art, but we do not see what sympathy there can be between the buyers and sellers of these works, except in the love of the art itself. When we find that these patriotic persons would destroy the art itself to promote the sale of their pictures, we know what to say to them. We are obliged to the zeal of our critic for having set this matter in so clear a light. The public will feel little sympathy with a body of Artists who disclaim all sympathy with all other Artists. They will doubt their pretensions to genius who have no feeling of respect for it in others; they will consider them as bastards, not children of the art, who would destroy their parent. The public will hardly consent, when the proposition is put to

them in this tangible shape, to give up the cause of liberal art and of every liberal sentiment connected with it, and enter, with their eyes open, into a pettifogging cabal to keep the Old Masters under, or hold their names up to derision "as good sport," merely to gratify the selfish importunity of a gang of sturdy beggars, who demand public encouragement and support, with a claim of settlement in one hand and a forged certificate of merit in the other. They can only deserve well of the public by deserving well of the art. Have we taken these men from the plough, from the counter, from the barber's block, from the shop-board, from the tap-room, and the stable-door, to raise them to fortune, to rank, and distinction in life, for the sake of art, to give them a chance of doing something in art like what had been done before them, of promoting and refining the public taste, of setting before them the great models of art, and by a pure love of truth and beauty, and by patient and disinterested aspirations after it, of rising to the highest excellence, and of making themselves "a name great above all names;" and do they now turn round upon us, and because they have neglected these high objects of their true calling for pitiful cabals and filling their pockets, insist that we shall league with them in crushing the progress of art, and the respect attached to all its great efforts? There is no other country in the world in which such a piece of impudent quackery could be put forward with impunity, and still less in which it could be put forward in the garb of patriotism. This is the effect of our gross island manners. The Catalogue writer carries his bear-garden notions of this virtue into the Fine Arts; and would set about destroying Dutch or Italian pictures as he would Dutch shipping or Italian Liberty. He goes up to the Rembrandts with the same swaggering Jack tar airs as he would to a battery of nine-pounders, and snaps his fingers at Raffaele as he would at the French. Yet he talks big about the Elgin Marbles,

because Mr Payne Knight has made a slip on that subject ; though, to be consistent, he ought to be for pounding them in a mortar, should get his friend the incendiary to set fire to the room building for them at the British Museum, or should get Mr Soane to build it. Patriotism and the Fine Arts have nothing to do with one another—because patriotism relates to exclusive advantages, and the advantages of the Fine Arts are not exclusive, but communicable. The physical property of one country cannot be shared without loss by another : the physical force of one country may destroy that of another. These, therefore, are objects of national jealousy and fear of encroachment ; for the interests or rights of different countries may be compromised in them. But it is not so in the Fine Arts, which depend upon taste and knowledge. We do not consume the works of art as articles of food, of clothing, or fuel ; but we brood over their idea, which is accessible to all, and may be multiplied without end, “with riches fincless.” Patriotism is “beastly ; subtle as the fox for prey ; warlike as the wolf for what it eats :” but art is ideal, and therefore liberal. The knowledge or perfection of art in one age or country, is the cause of its existence or perfection in another. Art is the cause of art in other men. Works of genius done by a Dutchman are the cause of genius in an Englishman—are the cause of taste in an Englishman. The patronage of foreign art is not to prevent, but to promote art in England. It does not prevent, but promotes taste in England. Art subsists by communication, not by exclusion. The light of art, like that of nature, shines on all alike ; and its benefit, like that of the sun, is in being seen and felt. The spirit of art is not the spirit of trade : it is not a question between the grower or consumer of some perishable and personal commodity, but it is a question between human genius and human taste, how much the one can produce for the benefit of mankind, and how

much the other can enjoy. It is "the link of peaceful commerce 'twixt dividable shores." To take from it this character is to take from it its best privilege, its humanity. Would any one, except our Catalogue-virtuoso and his like, think of destroying or concealing the monuments of art in past ages, as inconsistent with the progress of taste and civilisation in the present; or find fault with the introduction of the works of Raffaele into this country, as if their being done by an Italian confined the benefit to a foreign country, when all the benefit, all the great and lasting benefit (except the purchase-money, the lasting burden of the Catalogue, and the great test of the value of art in the eyes of the Academy), is instantly communicated to all eyes that behold and all hearts that can feel them? It is many years ago since we first saw the prints of the Cartoons hung round the parlour of a little inn on the great north road. We were then very young, and had not been initiated into the principles of taste and refinement of the "Catalogue Raisonné." We had heard of the fame of the Cartoons, but this was the first time that we had ever been admitted face to face into the presence of those divine works. "How were we then uplifted!" Prophets and apostles stood before us, and the Saviour of the Christian world, with his attributes of faith and power; miracles were working on the walls; the hand of Raffaele was there, and as his pencil traced the lines, we saw god-like spirits and lofty shapes descend and walk visibly the earth, but as if their thoughts still lifted them above the earth. There was that figure of St Paul, pointing with noble fervour to "temples not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," and that finer one of Christ in the boat, whose whole figure seems sustained by meekness and love, and that of the same Person, surrounded by the disciples, like a flock of sheep listening to the music of some divine shepherd. We knew not how enough to admire them. If from this transport and delight there arose in our breasts

a wish, a deep aspiration of mingled hope and fear, to be able one day to do something like them, that hope has long since vanished, but not with it the love of art, nor delight in works of art, nor admiration of the genius which produces them, nor respect for fame which rewards and crowns them ! Did we suspect that in this feeling of enthusiasm for the works of Raffaele we were deficient in patriotic sympathy, or that, in spreading it as far as we could, we did an injury to our country or to living art ? The very feeling showed that there was no such distinction in art, that her benefits were common, that the power of genius, like the spirit of the world, is everywhere alike present. And would the harpies of criticism try to extinguish this common benefit to their country from a pretended exclusive attachment to their countrymen ? Would they rob their country of Raffaele to set up the credit of their professional little-goes and E O tables—"cut-purses of the art, that from the shelf the precious diadem stole and put it in their pockets ?" Tired of exposing such knavery, we walked out the other day, and saw a bright cloud resting on the bosom of the blue expanse, which reminded us of what we had seen in some picture in the Louvre. We were suddenly roused from our reverie by recollecting that, till we had answered this catch-penny publication, we had no right, without being liable to a charge of disaffection to our country, or treachery to the art, to look at nature, or to think of anything like it in art not of British growth and manufacture ! To what absurdities may we be reduced by the malice of folly ! Our Catalogue-makers, like the puffers of the Gaslight Company, consider it only as a matter of trade, or what they can get by the sale and monopoly of it ; they would extinguish all of it that does not come through the miserable chinks and crannies of their patriotic sympathy, or would confine it in the hard, unfeeling sides of some body corporate, as Ariel was shut up in a cloven pine by the foul

witch Sycorax. The cabal of art in this country would keep it on the other side of the Channel. They would maintain a perpetual quarantine against it as infectious. They would subject it to new custom-house duties. They would create a right of search after all works of genuine art as contraband. They would establish an Alien office under the Royal Academy, to send all the finest pictures out of the country, to prevent unfair and invidious competition. The genius of modern art does not bathe in the dews of Castalie, but rises, like the dirty goddess in Gay's "Trivia," out of the Thames, just opposite Somerset House, and, armed with a Grub Street pen in one hand and a sign-post brush in the other, frightens the arts from proceeding any further. They would thus effectually suppress the writers of ancient genius and the progress of modern taste at one and the same time ; and if they did not sell their pictures, would find ease to their tortured minds by not seeing others admired.

The Catalogue-writer nicknames the Flemish painters the "Black Masters." Either this means that the works of Rubens and Vandyck were originally black pictures, that is, deeply shadowed like those of Rembrandt—which is false, there being no painter who used so little shadow as Vandyck or so much colour as Rubens—or it must mean that their pictures have turned darker with time, that is, that the art itself is a black art. Is this a triumph for the Academy ? Is the defect and decay of art a subject of exultation to the national genius ? Then there is no hope (in this country at least) "that a great man's memory may outlive him half a year !" Do they calculate that the decomposition and gradual disappearance of the standard works of Art will quicken the demand, and facilitate the sale of modern pictures ? Have they no hope of immortality themselves that they are glad to see the inevitable dissolution of all that has long flourished in splendour and in honour ? They are pleased to find that,

at the end of near two hundred years, the pictures of Vandyek and Rubens have suffered half as much from time as those of their late President have done in thirty or forty, or their own in the last ten or twelve years. So that the glory of painting is that it does not last for ever : it is this that puts the ancients and the moderns on a level. They hail with undisguised satisfaction the approaches of the slow, mouldering hand of time in those works which have lasted longest, not anticipating the premature fate of their own. Such is their short-sighted ambition. A picture is with them like the frame it is in, as good as new ; and the best picture that which was last painted. They make the weak side of art the test of its excellence ; and though a modern picture of two years' standing is hardly fit to be seen, from the general ignorance of the painter in the mechanical as well as other parts of the art, yet they are sure at any time to get the start of Rubens or Vandyek by painting a picture against the day of exhibition. We even question whether they would wish to make their own pictures last if they could, and whether they would not destroy their own works, as well as those of others (like chalk figures on the floors), to have new ones the next day. The Flemish pictures then, except those of Rembrandt, were not originally black ; they have not faded in proportion to the length of time they have been painted, and all that comes, then, of the nickname in the Catalogue is, that the pictures of the Old Masters have lasted longer than those of the present Members of the Royal Academy, and that the latter, it is to be presumed, do not wish their works to last so long, lest they should be called the "Black Masters." With respect to Rembrandt, this epithet may be literally true. But, we would ask, whether the style of *chiaroscuro*, in which Rembrandt painted, is not one fine view of nature and of art ? whether any other painter carried it to the same height of perfection as he did ? whether any other painter ever joined

the same depth of shadow with the same clearness? whether his tones were not as fine as they were true? whether a more thorough master of his art ever lived? whether he deserved for this to be nicknamed by the writer of the Catalogue, or to have his works "kept under, or himself held up to derision," by the Patrons and Directors of the British Institution for the Support and Encouragement of the Fine Arts?

But we have heard it said by a disciple and commentator on the Catalogue (one would think it was hardly possible to descend lower than the writer himself) that the Directors of the British Institution assume a consequence to themselves, hostile to the pretensions of modern professors, out of the reputation of the Old Masters, whom they affect to look upon with wonder, to worship as something preternatural; that they consider the bare possession of an old picture as a title to distinction, and the respect paid to art as the highest pretension of the owner. And is this, then, a subject of complaint with the Academy, that genius is thus thought of, when its claims are once fully established? that those high qualities, which are beyond the estimate of ignorance and selfishness while living receive their reward from distant ages? Do they not "feel the future in the instant?" Do they not know that those qualities which appeal neither to interest nor passion can only find their level with time, and would they annihilate the only pretensions they have? Or have they no conscious affinity with true genius, no claim to the reversion of true fame, no right of succession to this lasting inheritance and final reward of great exertions, which they would therefore destroy, to prevent others from enjoying it? Does all their ambition begin and end in their patriotic sympathy with the sale of modern works of art, and have they no fellow-feeling with the hopes and final destiny of human genius? What poet ever complained of the respect paid to Homer as derogatory to himself? The envy and

opposition to established fame is peculiar to the race of modern Artists ; and it is to be hoped it will remain so. It is the fault of their education. It is only by a liberal education that we learn to feel respect for the past, or to take an interest in the future. The knowledge of Artists is too often confined to their art, and their views to their own interest. Even in this they are wrong—in all respects they are wrong. As a mere matter of trade, the prejudice in favour of old pictures does not prevent but assists the sale of modern works of art. If there was not a prejudice in favour of old pictures, there could be a prejudice in favour of none, and none would be sold. The professors seem to think that for every old picture not sold one of their own would be. This is a false calculation. The contrary is true. For every old picture not sold, one of their own (in proportion) would not be sold. The practice of buying pictures is a habit, and it must begin with those pictures which have a character and name, and not with those which have none. “Depend upon it,” says Mr Burke in a letter to Barry, “whatever attracts public attention to the arts, will in the end be for the benefit of the Artists themselves.”* Again, do not the Academicians know that it is a contradiction in terms, that a man should enjoy the advantages of posthumous fame in his lifetime? Most men cease to be of any consequence at all when they are dead ; but it is the privilege of the man of genius to survive himself. But he cannot in the nature of things anticipate this privilege, because, in all that appeals to the general intellect of mankind, this appeal is strengthened as it spreads wider and is acknowledged ; because a man cannot unite in himself the suffrages of distant ages and nations ; because popularity, a

* Yet Mr Burke knew something of art and of the world. He thought the art should be encouraged for the sake of Artists. They think it should be destroyed for their sakes ; they would cut it up at once, as the man did the goose with golden eggs.

newspaper-puff, cannot have the certainty of lasting fame ; because it does not carry the same weight of sympathy with it ; because it cannot have the same interest, the same refinement or grandeur. If Mr West was equal to Raffaele (which he is not), if Mr Lawrence was equal to Vandyck or Titian (which he is not), if Mr Turner was equal to Claude Lorraine (which he is not), if Mr Wilkie was equal to Teniers (which he is not), yet they could not, nor ought they, to be thought of in the same manner, because there could not be the same proof of it, nor the same confidence in the opinion of a man and his friends, or of any one generation, as in that of successive generations and the voice of posterity. If it is said that we pass over the faults of the one and severely scrutinise the excellences of the other, this is also right and necessary, because the one have passed their trial and the others are upon it. If we forgive or overlook the faults of the ancients, it is because they have dearly earned it at our hands. We ought to have some objects to indulge our enthusiasm upon ; and we ought to indulge it upon the highest, and those that are the surest of deserving it. Would one of our Academicians expect us to look at his new house in one of the new squares with the same veneration as at Michael Angelo's, which he built with his own hands, or as at Tully's villa, or as at the tomb of Virgil ? We have no doubt they would, but we cannot. Besides, if it were possible to transfer our old prejudices to new candidates, the way to effect this is not by destroying them. If we have no confidence in all that has gone before us, and in what has received the sanction of time and the concurring testimony of disinterested judges, are we to believe all of a sudden that excellence has started up in our own times, because it never existed before ? are we to take the Artists' own word for their superiority to their predecessors ? There is one other plea made by the moderns, "that they must live," and the answer to it is that they do live. An Academician makes his thousand

or thousands a year by portrait-painting, and complains that the encouragement given to foreign art deprives him of the means of subsistence, and prevents him from indulging his genius in works of high history—"playing at will his virgin fancies wild."

As to the comparative merits of the ancients and the moderns, it does not admit of a question. The odds are too much in favour of the former, because it is likely that more good pictures were painted in the last three hundred than in the last thirty years. Now, the old pictures are the best remaining out of all that period, setting aside those of living Artists. If they are bad, the art itself is good for nothing; for they are the best that ever were. They are not good because they are old; but they have become old because they are good. The question is not between this and any other generation, but between the present and all preceding generations, whom the Catalogue-writer, in his misguided zeal, undertakes to vilify and "to keep under, or hold up to derision." To say that the great names which have come down to us are not worth anything is to say that the mountain tops which we see in the farthest horizon are not so high as the intervening objects. If there had been any greater painters than Vandyck, or Rubens, or Raffaele, or Rembrandt, or Nicholas Poussin, or Claude Lorraine, we should have heard of them, we should have seen them in the Gallery, and we should have read a patriotic and disinterested account of them in the "*Catalogue Raisonné*." Waiving the unfair and invidious comparison between all former excellence and the concentrated essence of it in the present age, let us ask who, in the last generation of painters, was equal to the Old Masters? Was it Highmore, or Hayman, or Hudson, or Kneller? Who was the English Raffaele, or Rubens, or Vandyck, of that day, to whom the Catalogue-critic would have extended his patriotic sympathy and damning patronage? Kneller, we have been told, was thought

superior to Vandyck by the persons of fashion whom he painted. So St Thomas Apostle seems higher than St Paul's while you are close under it; but the farther off you go, the higher the mighty dome aspires to the skies. What is to become of all those great men who flourished in our own time—"like flowers in men's caps, dying or ere they sicken"—Hoppner, Opie, Shee, Loutherbourn, Rigaud, Romney, Barry, the painters of the Shakespeare Gallery? "Gone to the vault of all the Capulets," and their pictures with them, or before them! Shall we put more faith in their successors? Shall we take the words of their friends for their taste and genius? No, we will stick to what we know will stick to us, the "heir-looms" of the art, the Black Masters. The picture, for instance, of Charles I. on horseback, which our critic criticises with such heavy drollery, with the stupid knowing air of a horse-jockey or farrier, and in the right slang of the veterinary art, is worth all the pictures that were ever exhibited at the Royal Academy (from the time of Sir Joshua to the present time inclusive) put together. It shows more knowledge and feeling of the art, more skill and beauty, more sense of what it is in objects that gives pleasure to the eye, with more power to communicate this pleasure to the world. If either this single picture, or all the number that has ever appeared at the Academy, were to be destroyed, there could not be a question which, with any Artist, or with any judge or lover of art. So stands the account between ancient and modern art! By this we may judge of all the rest. The Catalogue-writer makes some strictures, in the second part, on the Waterloo Exhibition, which he does not think what it ought to be. We wonder he had another word to say on modern art after seeing it. He should instantly have taken the resolution of Iago: "From this time forth I never will speak more."

We have already made some remarks on Claude's landscapes. We shall return to them here, and we would ask

those who have seen them at the British Institution : "Is the general effect in his pictures injured by the details ? Is the truth inconsistent with the beauty of the imitation ? Does the perpetual profusion of objects and scenery, all perfect in themselves, interfere with the simple grandeur and comprehensive magnificence of the whole ? Does the precision with which a plant is marked in the foreground, take away the air-drawn distinctions of the blue glimmering horizon ? Is there any want of that endless airy space, where the eye wanders at liberty under the open sky, explores distant objects, and returns back as from a delightful journey ?" His landscapes have all that is requisite and refined in art and nature. Everything is moulded into grace and harmony ; and at touch of his pencil, shepherds with their flocks, temples and groves, and winding glades and scattered hamlets, rise up in never-ending succession, under the azure sky and the resplendent sun, while

" Universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Leads on the eternal spring."

Michael Angelo has left in one of his sonnets a fine apostrophe to the earliest poet of Italy—

" Fain would I, to be what our Dante was,
Forego the happiest fortunes of mankind ! "

What landscape-painter does not feel that of Claude ?

It seems the author of the " Catalogue Raisonné " does not, for he thus speaks of him—

" *David Encamped*,—CLAUDE. (Rev. W. H. Carr.)—
If it were not for the horrible composition of this landscape—the tasteless hole-in-the-wall—the tents, and daddy-long-legs, whom Mr Carr has christened " King David," we should be greatly offended by its present obtrusion on the public ; as it is, we are bound to suppose the possessor sees deeper into the millstone than ourselves ; and if it

were politic, could thoroughly explain the matter to our satisfaction. Be this as it may, we cannot resist expressing our regret at the absence of Claude Gillée's *Muses*. The public in general merely know by tradition that this painter was a pastry-cook. Had this delectable composition to which we now allude been brought forward, they would have had the evidence of his practice to confirm it. It is said to represent "Mount Parnassus;" and no one, who for a moment has seen the picture, can entertain the smallest doubt of its having been taken from one of his own *plateaux*. The figures have all the character and drawing which they might be expected to derive from a species of twelfth-cake casts. The swans are of the truest wax-shapes, while the water bears every mark of being done from something as right earnest as that at Sadlers' Wells, and the Prince's Fête of 1814."

This is the way in which the Catalogue-writer aids and abets the Royal Academy in the promotion and encouragement of the Fine Arts in this country. Now, what if we were to imitate him, and to say of "the ablest landscape-painter living," that—No, we will not; we have blotted out the passage after we had written it,—because it would be bad wit, bad manners, and bad reasoning. Yet we dare be sworn it is as good wit, as good manners, as good reasoning, as the wittiest, the most gentlemanly, and the most rational passage, in the 'Catalogue Raisonné. Suppose we were to put forth voluntarily such a criticism on one of Mr Turner's landscapes. What then? We should do a great injustice to an able and ingenious man, and disgrace ourselves; but we should not hurt a sentiment, we should not mar a principle, we should not invade the sanctuary of art. Mr Turner's pictures have not, like Claude's, become a sentiment in the heart of Europe; his fame has not been stamped and rendered sacred by the hand of time. Perhaps it never will.*

* In fact, Mr Turner's landscapes are nothing but stained water-colour drawings, loaded with oil-colour.

We have only another word to add on this very lowest of all subjects. The writer calls in the cant of morality to his aid; he was quite shocked to find himself in the company of some female relations, *vis-a-vis* with a naked figure of Annibal Caracci's. Yet he thinks the Elgin Marbles likely to raise the morals of the country to a high pitch of refinement. Good. The fellow is a hypocrite too.

The writer of the 'Catalogue Raisonné' has fallen foul of two things which ought to be sacred to Artists and lovers of Art—Genius and Fame. If they are not sacred to them, we do not know to whom they will be sacred. A work such as the present shows that the person who could write it must either have no knowledge or taste for art, or must be actuated by a feeling of the basest and most unaccountable malignity towards it. It shows that any body of men by whom it could be set on foot or encouraged are not an Academy of Art. It shows that a country in which such a publication could make its appearance, is not the country of the Fine Arts. Does the writer think to prove the genius of his countrymen for art by proclaiming their utter insensibility and flagitious contempt for all beauty and excellence in the art, except in their own works? No; it is very true that the English are a shop-keeping nation; and the 'Catalogue Raisonné' is the proof of it.

Finally, the works of the moderns are not, like those of the Old Masters, a second nature. O Art, true likeness of nature, "balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course, chief nourisher in life's feast," of what would our Catalogue-mongers deprive us in depriving us of thee and of thy glories, and of the lasting works of the great Painters, and of their names no less magnificent, grateful to our hearts as the sound of celestial harmony from other spheres, walking around us (whether heard or not) from youth to age, the stay, the guide, and anchor of our purest thoughts; whom, having once seen, we always remember, and who teach us to see all things through them; without whom life would

be to begin again, and the earth barren ; of Raffaele, who lifted the human form half way to heaven ; of Titian, who painted the mind in the face, and unfolded the soul of things to the eye ; of Rubens, around whose pencil gorgeous shapes thronged numberless, startling us by the novel accidents of form and colour, putting the spirit of motion into the universe, and weaving a gay fantastic round and Bacchanalian dance with nature ; of thee, too, Rembrandt, who didst redeem one half of nature from obloquy, from the nickname in the Catalogue, " smoothing the raven down of darkness till it smiled," and tinging it with light-like streaks of burnished ore ; of these, and more of whom the world is scarce worthy ; and what would they give us in return ? A Bartlemy Fair Puppet Show, Mrs Salmon's Royal Wax-work, or the Exhibition of the Royal Academy !

WEST'S PICTURE OF DEATH ON THE PALE HORSE.*

MR WEST'S name stands deservedly high in the annals of art in this country—too high for him to condescend to be his own puffer, even at second-hand. He comes forward, in the present instance, as the painter and the showman of the piece ; as the candidate for public applause, and the judge who awards himself the prize ; as the idol on the altar and the priest who offers up the grateful incense of praise. He places himself, as it were, before his own performance, with a *Catalogue Raisonné* in his hand, and, before the spectator can form a judgment on the work itself, dazzles him with an account of the prodigies of art which are there conceived and executed. This is not quite fair. It is a proceeding which, though “it sets on a quantity of barren spectators to admire, cannot but make the judicious grieve.” Mr West, by thus taking to himself unlimited credit for “the high endeavour and the glad success,” by proclaiming aloud that he has aimed at the highest sublimities of his art, and as loudly, with a singular mixture of pomposity and phlegm, that he has fully accomplished all that his most ardent hopes had anticipated,—must, we should think, obtain a great deal of spurious, catchpenny reputation, and lose a great deal of that genuine tribute of approbation to which he is otherwise entitled, by turning the attention of the well-informed and unprejudiced part of the community from his real and undoubted merits to his groundless and exaggerated pretensions. Self-praise, it is said, is no praise ; but it is worse than this. It either

* From the *Edinburgh Magazine*, for December 1817.

shows great weakness and vanity for an artist to talk (or to get another to talk) of his own work, which was produced yesterday, and may be forgotten to-morrow, with the same lofty, emphatic, solemn tone, as if it were already stamped with the voice of ages, and had become sacred to the imagination of the beholder ; or else the doing so is a deliberate attempt to encroach on the right of private judgment and public opinion, which those who are not its dupes will resent accordingly, and endeavour to repel by acts of precaution or hostility. An unsuccessful effort to extort admiration is sure to involve its own punishment.

We should not have made these remarks if the "Description of the Picture of Death" had been a solitary instance of the kind ; but it is one of a series of descriptions of the same sort—it is a part of a system of self-adulation, which cannot be too much discouraged. Perhaps Mr West may say that the descriptive Catalogue is not his ; that he has nothing to do with its composition or absurdities. But it must be written with his consent and approbation ; and this is a sanction which it ought not to receive. We presume the artist would have it in his option to put a negative on any undue censure or flagrant abuse of his picture ; it must be equally in his power, and it is equally incumbent upon him to reject, with dignified modesty, the gross and palpable flatteries which it contains, direct or by implication.

The first notice we received of this picture was by an advertisement in a morning paper (the editor of which is not apt to hazard extravagant opinions without a prompter), purporting that, "in consequence of the President's having devoted a year and a half to its completion, and of its having for its subject the Terrible Sublime, it would place Great Britain in the same conspicuous relation to the rest of Europe in arts, that the battle of Waterloo had done in arms!" We shall not stay to decide between the battle and the picture ; but the writer follows up the same idea

of the Terrible Sublime in the Catalogue, the first paragraph of which is conceived in the following terms :—

“The general effect proposed to be excited by this picture is the terrible sublime, and its various modifications, until lost in the opposite extremes of pity and horror, a sentiment which painting has so seldom attempted to awaken, that a particular description of the subject will probably be acceptable to the public.”

“So shall my anticipation prevent your discovery.” Mr West here, like Bayes in the ‘Rehearsal,’ insinuates the plot very profoundly. He has, it seems, opened a new walk in art with its alternate ramifications into the opposite regions of horror and pity, and kindly takes the reader by the hand, to show him how triumphantly he has arrived at the end of his journey.

“In poetry,” continues the writer, “the same effect is produced by a few abrupt and rapid gleams of description, touching, as it were with fire the features and edges of a general mass of awful obscurity ; but in painting, such indistinctness would be a defect, and imply that the artist wanted the power to portray the conceptions of his fancy. Mr West was of opinion that to delineate a physical form, which in its moral impression would approximate to that of the visionary Death of Milton, it was necessary to endow it, if possible, with the appearance of superhuman strength and energy. He has, therefore, exerted the utmost force and perspicuity of his pencil on the central figure.”

This is “spoken with authority, and not as the scribes.” Poetry, according to the definition here introduced of it, resembles a candle-light picture, which gives merely the rim and outlines of things in a vivid and dazzling, but confused and imperfect manner. We cannot tell whether this account will be considered as satisfactory ; but Mr West, or his commentator, should tread cautiously on this ground. He may otherwise commit himself, not only in a comparison with the epic poet, but with the inspired writer, who only

uses words. It will hardly be contended, for instance, that the account of Death on the Pale Horse, in the book of Revelations, never produced its due effect of the terrible sublime, till the deficiencies of the pen were supplied by the pencil. Neither do we see how the endowing a physical form with superhuman strength has any necessary connection with the moral impression of the visionary Death of Milton. There seems to be here some radical mistake in Mr West's theory. The moral attributes of death are powers and effects of an infinitely wide and general description, which no individual or physical form can possibly represent, but by courtesy of speech or by distant analogy. The moral impression of death is essentially visionary ; its reality is in the mind's eye. Words are here the only things ; and things, physical forms, the mere mockeries of the understanding. The less definite the conception, the less bodily, the more vast, unformed, and unsubstantial, the nearer does it approach to some resemblance of that omnipresent, lasting, universal, irresistible principle, which everywhere, and at some time or other, exerts its power over all things. Death is a mighty abstraction, like night, or space, or time. He is an ugly customer, who will not be invited to supper, or to sit for his picture. He is with us and about us, but we do not see him. He stalks on before us, and we do not mind him ; he follows us behind, and we do not look back at him. We do not see him making faces at us in our lifetime ; we do not feel him tickling our bare ribs afterwards, nor look at him through the empty grating of our hollow eyes. Does Mr West really suppose that he has put the very image of death upon his canvas ? that he has taken the fear of him out of our hearts ; that he has circumscribed his power with a pair of compasses ; that he has measured the length of his arm with a two-foot rule ; that he has suspended the stroke of his dart with a stroke of his pencil ; that he has laid his hands on the universal principle of destruction, and hemmed him in with lines and lineaments,

and made a gazing-stock and a show of him, "under the patronage of the Prince Regent" (as that illustrious person has taken, and confined, and made a show of another enemy of the human race)—so that the work of decay and dissolution is no longer going on in nature; that all we have heard or felt of death is but a fable compared with this distinct, living, and warranted likeness of him? Oh, no! There is no power in the pencil actually to embody an abstraction, to impound the imagination, to circumvent the powers of the soul, which hold communion with the universe. The painter cannot make the general particular, the infinite and imaginary, defined and palpable, that which is only believed and dreaded, an object of sight.

As Mr West appears to have wrong notions of the powers of his art, so he seems not to put in practice all that it is capable of. The only way in which the painter of genius can represent the force of moral truth, is by translating it into an artificial language of his own,—by substituting hieroglyphics for words, and presenting the closest and most striking affinities his fancy and observation can suggest between the general idea and the visible illustration of it. Here we think Mr West has failed. The artist has represented Death riding over his prostrate victims in all the rage of impotent despair. He is in a great splutter, and seems making a last effort to frighten his foes by an explosion of red-hot thunder-bolts, and a pompous display of his allegorical paraphernalia. He has not the calm, still, majestic form of Death, killing by a look,—withering by a touch. His presence does not make the still air cold. His flesh is not stony or cadaverous, but is crusted over with a yellow glutinous paste, as if it had been baked in a pie. Milton makes Death "grin horrible a ghastly smile," with an evident allusion to the common Death's head; but in the picture he seems grinning for a wager, with a full row of loose rotten teeth; and his terrible form is covered with a long black drapery, which would cut a figure in an under-

taker's shop, and which cuts a figure where it is (for it is finely painted), but which serves only as a disguise for the King of Terrors. We have no idea of such a swaggering and blustering Death as this of Mr West's. He has not invoked a ghastly spectre from the tomb, but has called up an old squalid ruffian from a night cellar, and crowned him "monarch of the universal world." The horse on which he rides is not "pale," but white. There is no gusto, no imagination in Mr West's colouring. As to his figure, the description gives an accurate idea of it enough. "His horse rushes forward with the universal wildness of a tempestuous element, breathing livid pestilence, and rearing and trampling with the vehemence of unbridled fury." The style of the figure corresponds to the style of the description. It is over-loaded and top-heavy. The chest of the animal is a great deal too long for the legs.

The painter has made amends for this splashing figure of the Pale Horse, by those of the White and Red Horse. They are like a couple of rocking horses, and go as easy. Mr West's vicarious egotism obtrudes itself again offensively in speaking of the Rider on the White Horse. "As he is supposed," says the Catalogue, "to represent the Gospel, it was requisite that he should be invested with those exterior indications of purity, excellence, and dignity, which are associated in our minds with the name and offices of the Messiah. But it was not the Saviour healing and comforting the afflicted, or the meek and lowly Jesus, bearing with resignation the scorn and hatred of the scoffing multitude, that was to be represented; it was the King of Kings going forth, conquering and to conquer. He is therefore painted with a solemn countenance, expressive of a mind filled with the thoughts of a great enterprise; and he advances onward in his sublime career with that serene majesty," &c. Now this is surely an unwarrantable assumption of public opinion in a matter of taste. Christ is not represented in this picture as he was in Mr West's two former pictures;

but in all three he gives you to understand that he has reflected the true countenance and divine character of the Messiah. *Multum abludit imago.* The Christs in each picture have a different character indeed, but they only present a variety of meanness and insipidity. But the unwary spectator, who looks at the Catalogue to know what he is to think of the picture, and reads all these therefore of sublimity, serenity, purity, &c., considers them as so many infallible inferences and demonstrations of the painter's skill.

Mr West has been tolerably successful in the delineation of the neutral character of the "Man on the Black Horse;" but "the two wretched emaciated figures" of a man and woman before him, "absorbed in the feelings of their own particular misery," are not likely to excite any sympathy in the beholders. They exhibit the lowest stage of mental and physical imbecility, that could never by any possibility come to any good. In the domestic group in the foreground, "the painter has attempted to excite the strongest degree of pity which his subject admitted, and to contrast the surrounding objects with images of tenderness and beauty;" and it is here that he has principally failed. The Dying Mother appears to have been in her lifetime a plaster-cast from the antique, stained with a little purple and yellow, to imitate the life. The "Lovely Infant" that is falling from her breast, is a hideous little creature, with glazed eyes and livid aspect, borrowed from the infant who is falling out of his mother's lap over the bridge, in Hogarth's print of "Gin Lane." The Husband's features, who is placed in so pathetic an attitude, are cut out of the hardest wood, and of the deepest dye; and the surviving Daughter, who is stated "to be sensible only to the loss she has sustained by the death of so kind a parent," is neither better nor worse than the figures we meet with in the elegant frontispieces to history books or family stories, intended as Christmas presents to good little boys and girls. The foreshortening of the lower extremities, both of the Mother

and Child, is wretchedly defective, both in drawing and colouring.

In describing "the anarchy of the combats of men and beasts," Mr West has attained that sort of excellence which always arises from a knowledge of the rules of composition. His lion, however, looks as if his face and velvet paws were covered with calf's skin, or leather gloves pulled carefully over them ; so little is the appearance of hair given ! The youth in his group, whom Mr West celebrates for his muscular, manly courage, has a fine rustic look of health and strength about him ; but we think the other figure, with scowling, swarthy face, striking at an animal, is superior in force of character and expression. In the back figure of the man holding his hand to his head (with no very dignified action), the artist has well imitated the bad colouring, and stiff, inanimate drawing of Poussin. The remaining figures are not of much importance, or are striking only from their defects. Mr West, however, omits no opportunity of discreetly sounding his own praise. "The story of this group," it is said, "would have been incomplete, had the lions not been shown conquerors to a certain extent, by the two wounded men," &c. As it is, it is perfect ! Admirable critic ! Again we are told, "The pyramidal form of this large division is perfected by a furious bull," &c. Nay, indeed, the form of the pyramid is even preserved in the title-page of the Catalogue. The prettiest incident in the picture, is the dove lamenting over its mate, just killed by the serpent. We do not deny Mr West the praise of invention. Upon the whole, we think this the best coloured and most picturesque of all Mr West's productions ; and in all that relates to composition, and the introduction of the adjuncts of historical design, it shows, like his other works, the hand of a master. In the same room is the picture of 'Christ Rejected.' Alas ! how changed, and in how short a time ! The colours are scarcely dry, and it already looks dingy, flat, and faded.

ON FARINGTON'S LIFE OF SIR JOSHUA
REYNOLDS.*

THIS, with regard to its main object, must certainly be regarded as a superfluous publication. Forty years after the death of Sir Joshua, Mr Farington has found himself called upon to put forth a thin octavo volume, to revive the recollection of the dispute between their late President and the Academy, and to correct an error into which Mr Malone had fallen, in supposing that Sir Joshua was not entirely to blame in that business. This is a remarkable instance of the tenaciousness of corporate bodies with respect to the immaculate purity of their conduct. It was at first suggested that printed notes might be sufficient, with references to the pages of Mr Malone's account: but it was finally judged best to give it as a connected narrative—that the vindication of the Academy might slip in only as a parenthesis or an episode. So we have a full account of Sir Joshua's birth and parentage, godfathers and godmothers, with as many repetitions beside as were necessary to give a colouring to Mr Farington's ultimate object. The manner in which the plot of the publication is insinuated, is curious and characteristic: but our business at present is with certain more general matters, on which we have some observations to offer.

“In the present instance,” says Mr F., “we see how a character, formed by early habits of consideration, self-government, and persevering industry, acquired the highest fame; and made his path through life a course of unruffled moral enjoyment. Sir Joshua Reynolds, when young, wrote rules of conduct for himself. One of his maxims

* From the *Edinburgh Review* for August, 1820.

was, 'that the great principle of being happy in this world, is not to mind or be affected with small things.' To this rule he strictly adhered ; and the constant habit of controlling his mind contributed greatly to that evenness of temper which enabled him to live pleasantly with persons of all descriptions. Placability of temper may be said to have been his characteristic. The happiness of possessing such a disposition was acknowledged by his friend Dr Johnson, who said, 'Reynolds was the most invulnerable man he had ever known.'

"The life of this distinguished artist exhibits a useful lesson to all those who may devote themselves to the same pursuit. He was not of the class of such as have been held up, or who have esteemed themselves, to be heaven-born geniuses. He appeared to think little of such claims. It will be seen, in the account of his progress to the high situation he attained in his profession, that at no period was there in him any such fancied inspiration ; on the contrary, every youthful reader of the *Memoirs of Sir Joshua Reynolds* may feel assured, that his ultimate success will be in proportion to the resolution with which he follows his example."

This, we believe, is the current morality and philosophy of the present day ; and therefore it is of more consequence to observe, that it appears to us to be a mere tissue of sophistry and folly. And first, as to happiness depending on "not being affected with small things," it seems plain enough, that a continued flow of pleasurable sensations cannot depend every moment on great objects. Children are supposed to have a fair share of enjoyment ; and yet this arises chiefly from their being delighted with trifles—"pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw." The reason why we so seldom carry on the happy vivacity of early youth into maturer age is, that we form to ourselves a higher standard of enjoyment than we can realise ; and that our passions gradually fasten on certain favourite

objects which, in proportion to their magnitude, are of rare occurrence, and for the most part out of our reach. The example, too, which suggested these general remarks, actually exposes their fallacy. Sir Joshua did not owe his happiness to his contempt of little things, but to his success in great ones—and it was by that actual success, far more than by the meritorious industry and exertion that contributed to it, that he was enabled to disregard little vexations. Was Richardson, for example, who, it is observed afterwards, “had merit in his profession, but not of a high order, though he thought so well on the subject of art, and had practised it so long,” to feel an equal moral enjoyment in the want of equal success? Was the idea of that excellence, which he had so long laboured in vain to realise, to console him for the loss of that “highest fame,” which is here represented as the invariable concomitant of persevering industry; or was he to disregard his failure as a trifle? Was the consciousness that he had done his best, to stand him instead of that “unruffled moral enjoyment” which Sir Joshua owed in no small degree to the coronet-coaches that besieged his doors, to the great names that sat at his table, to the beauty that crowded his painting room, and reflected its loveliness back from the lucid mirror of his canvas? These things do indeed put a man above minding little inconveniences, and “greatly contribute to that evenness of temper, which enables him to live pleasantly with persons of all descriptions.” But was Hudson, Sir Joshua’s master, who had grown old and rich in the cultivation of his art, and who found himself suddenly outdone and eclipsed by his pupil, to derive much unruffled enjoyment from this petty circumstance, or to comfort himself with one of those maxims which young Reynolds had written out for his conduct in life? When Sir Joshua himself lost the use of one of his eyes, in the decline of his life, he became peevish, and did not long survive the practice of his

favourite art. Suppose the same loss to have happened to him in the meridian of his fame, we fear that all his consciousness of merit, and all his efforts of industry, would have been insufficient to supply that unruffled felicity which we are here taught to refer exclusively to these high sources.

The truth is, that these specious maxims, though they seem at first sight to minister to content, and to encourage meritorious exertion, lead in fact to a wrong estimate of human life, to unreasonable anticipations of success, and to bitter repinings and regrets at what, in any reverse of fortune, we think the injustice of society and the caprice of nature. We have a very remarkable instance of this process of mental sophistication, or the setting up a theory against experience, and then wondering that human nature does not answer to our theory, in what our author says on this very subject of Hudson, and his more fortunate scholar afterwards. "It might be thought that the talents of Reynolds, to which no degree of ignorance or imbecility in the art could be insensible, added to his extraordinary reputation, would have extinguished every feeling of jealousy or rivalry in the mind of his master Hudson; but the malady was so deeply seated as to defy the usual remedies applied by time and reflection. Hudson, when at the head of his art, admired and praised by all, had seen a youth rise up and annihilate both his income and his fame; and he never could divest his mind of the feelings of mortification caused by the loss he had sustained." This Mr Farington actually considers as something quite extraordinary and unreasonable; and which might have been easily prevented by a diligent study of Sir Joshua's admirable aphorisms, against being affected by small things. Such is our Academician's ethical simplicity and enviable ignorance of the world!

One would think that the name of Hudson, which occurs frequently in these pages, might have taught our

learned author some little distrust of that other favourite maxim, that genius is the effect of education, encouragement, and practice, which is the basis of his whole moral and intellectual system, and is thus distinctly announced and enforced in a very elaborate passage.

“With respect to his (Sir Joshua’s) early indications of talent for the art he afterwards professed, it would be idle to dwell upon them as manifesting anything more than is common among boys of his age. As an amusement he probably preferred drawing to any other to which he was tempted. In the specimens which have been preserved, there is no sign of premature ingenuity; his history is, in this respect, like what might be written of many other artists, perhaps of artists in general. His attempts were applauded by kind and sanguine friends; and this encouraged him to persevere till it became a fixed desire in him to make further proficiency, and continually to request that it might be his profession. It is said, that his purpose was determined by reading Richardson’s “Treatise on Painting.” Possibly it might have been so; his thoughts having been previously occupied with the subject. Dr Johnson, in his *Life of Cowley*, writes as follows—“In the windows of his mother’s apartment lay Spenser’s “*Faërie Queen*,” which he very early took delight to read, till by feeling the charms of verse, he became, as he relates, irrecoverably a poet. Such are the accidents which, sometimes remembered, and perhaps sometimes forgotten, produce that peculiar designation of mind, and propensity for some certain science or employment, which is commonly called Genius. The true genius is a man of large general powers accidentally determined in some particular direction. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the great painter of the present age, had the first fondness for his art excited by the perusal of Richardson’s “Treatise.” In this definition of genius, Reynolds fully concurred with Dr Johnson; and he was himself an instance in proof of its truth.

He had a sound natural capacity, and, by observation and long-continued labour, always discriminating with judgment, he obtained universal applause, and established his claim to be ranked amongst those to whom the highest praise is due ; for his productions exhibited perfect originality. No artist ever consulted the works of eminent predecessors more than Sir Joshua Reynolds. He drew from every possible source something which might improve his practice ; and he resolved the whole of what he saw in nature and found in art, into a union which made his pictures a singular display of grace, truth, beauty, and richness."

From the time that Mr Locke exploded innate ideas in the commencement of the last century, there began to be a confused apprehension in some speculative heads, that there could be no innate faculties either ; and our half-metaphysicians have been floundering about in this notion ever since : as if, because there are no innate ideas, that is, no actual impressions existing in the mind without objects, there could be no peculiar capacity to receive them from objects ; or as if there might not be as great a difference in the capacity itself as in the outward objects to be impressed upon it. We might as well deny at once, that there are organs or faculties to receive impressions, because there are no innate ideas, as deny that there is an inherent difference in the organs or faculties to receive impressions of any particular kind. If the capacity exists (which it must do), there may, nay we should say there must, be a difference in it in different persons, and with respect to different things. To allege that there is such a difference, no more implies the doctrine of innate ideas, than to say, that the brain of a man is more fitted to discern external objects than a block of marble, imports that there are innate ideas in the brain, or in the block of marble. The impression, it is true, does not exist in the sealing-wax till the seal has been applied to it :

but there was the previous capacity to receive the impression ; and there may be, and most probably is, a greater degree of fitness in one piece of sealing-wax than in another. That the original capacity, the aptitude for certain impressions or pursuits, should be necessarily the same in different instances, with the diversity that we see in men's organs, faculties, and acquirements of various kinds, is a supposition not only gratuitous, but absurd. There is the capacity of animals, the capacity of idiots, and of half idiots and half madmen of various descriptions ; there is capacity, in short, of all sorts and degrees, from an oyster to a Newton : yet we are gravely told, that wherever there is a power of sensation, the genius must be the same, and would, with proper cultivation, produce the same effects. "No," say the French materialists ; but in minds commonly well organised (*communément bien organisés*) the results will, in the same given circumstances, be the same." That is, in the same circumstances, and with the same average capacity, there will be the same average degree of genius or imbecility—which is just an identical proposition.

To make any sense at all of the doctrine, that circumstances are everything, and natural genius nothing, the result ought at least to correspond to the aggregate of impressions, determining the mind this way or that, like so many weights in a scale. But the advocates of this doctrine allow that the result is not by any means according to the known aggregate of impressions ; but, on the contrary, that one of the most insignificant, or one not at all perceived, will turn the scale against the bias and experience of a man's whole life. The reasoning is here lame again. These persons wish to get rid of occult causes, to refer everything to distinct principles and a visible origin ; and yet they say that they know not how it is that in spite of all visible circumstances, such a one

should be an incorrigible blockhead, and such another an extraordinary genius; but that no doubt there was a secret influence exerted, a by-play in it, in which nature had no hand, but accident gave a nod, and in a lucky or unlucky minute fixed the destiny of both for life by some slight and transient impulse! Now this is like the reasoning of the astrologers, who pretend that your whole history is to be traced to the constellation under which you were born; and when you object that two men born at the same time have the most different character and fortune, they answer, that there was an imperceptible interval between the moment of their births, that made the whole difference. But if this short interval, of which no one could be aware, made the whole difference, it also makes their whole science vain. Besides, the notion of an accidental impulse, a slight turn of the screws giving a total revulsion to the whole frame of the mind, is only intelligible on the supposition of an original or previous bias which falls in with that impression, and catches at the long wished-for opportunity of disclosing itself:—like combustible matter meeting with the spark that kindles it into a flame. But it is little less than sheer nonsense to maintain, while outward impressions are said to be everything, and the mind alike indifferent to all, that one single unconscious impression shall decide upon a man's whole character, genius, and pursuits in life,—and all the rest thenceforward go for nothing.

Again, we hear it said that the difference of understanding or character is not very apparent at first,—though this is not uniformly true. But neither is the difference between an oak or a briar very great in the seed or in the shoot; yet will any one deny that the germ is there, or that the soil, culture, the sun and heat, alone produce the difference? So circumstances are necessary to the mind; but the mind is necessary to circumstances. The ultimate success depends on the joint action of both. They were fools who believed

in innate ideas, or talked of "heaven-born genius" without any means of developing it. They are greater, because more learned, fools, who assert that circumstances alone can create or develop genius, where none exists. We may distinguish a stature of the mind as well as of the body,—a mould, a form, to which it is predetermined irrevocably. It is true that exercise gives strength to the faculties both of mind and body; but it is not true that it is the only source of strength in either case. Exercise will make a weak man strong, but it will make a strong man stronger. A dwarf will never be a match for a giant, train him ever so. And are there not dwarfs as well as giants in intellect? Appearances are for it, and reason is not against it.

There are, beyond all dispute, persons who have a talent for particular things, which, according to Dr Johnson's definition of genius, proceeds from "a greater general capacity accidentally determined to a particular direction." But this, instead of solving, doubles the miracle of genius; for it leaves entire all the former objections to inherent talent, and supposes that one man "of large general capacity" is all sorts of genius at once. This is like admitting that one man may be naturally stronger than another—but denying that he can be naturally stronger in the legs or the arms only; and deserting the ground of original equality, would drive the theorist to maintain that the inequality which exists must always be universal, and not particular, although all the instances we actually meet with are particular only. Now, surely we have no right to give any man credit for genius in more things than he has shown a particular genius in. In looking round us in the world, it is most certain that we find men of large general capacity and no particular talent, and others with the most exquisite turn for some particular thing, and no general talent. Would Dr Johnson have made Reynolds, or Goldsmith Burke, by beginning early and continuing late? We should make strange havoc by this arbitrary

transposition of genius and industry. Some persons cannot for their lives understand the first proposition in Euclid. Would they ever make great mathematicians; or does this incapacity preclude them from ever excelling in any other art or mystery? Swift was admitted by special grace to a bachelor's degree at Dublin College, which, however, did not prevent him from writing 'Gulliver's Travels;' and Claude Lorraine was turned away by his master from the trade of a pastry-cook, to which he was apprenticed, for sheer stupidity. People often fail most in what they set themselves most diligently about, and discover an unaccountable *knack* at something else without any effort or even consciousness that they possess it. One great proof and beauty of works of true genius is the ease, simplicity, and freedom from conscious effort which pervades them. Not only in different things is there this difference of skill and aptness displayed; but in the same thing to which a man's attention is continually directed, how narrow is the sphere of human excellence, how distinct the line of pursuit which Nature has marked out even for those whom she has most favoured! Thus in painting: Raffaele excelled in drawing, Titian in colouring, Rembrandt in *chiaroscuro*. A small part of nature was revealed to each by a peculiar felicity of conformation; and they would have made sad work of it, if each had neglected his own advantages to go in search of those of others, on the principle that genius is a large general capacity, transferred by will or accident to some particular channel.

It may be said that in all these cases it is habit, not nature, that produces the disqualification for different pursuits. But if the bias given to the mind by a particular study totally unfits it for others, is it not probable that there is something in the nature of those studies which requires a particular bias and structure of the faculties to excel in them from the very first? If genius

were, as some pretend, the mere exercise of general power on a particular subject, without any difference of organs or subordinate faculties, a man would improve equally in everything, and grow wise at all points; but if, besides mere general power, there is a constant exercise and sharpening of different organs and faculties required for any particular pursuit, then a natural susceptibility of those organs and faculties must greatly assist him in his progress. To argue otherwise is to shut one's eyes to the whole mass of inductive evidence, and to run headlong into a dogmatical theory, depending wholly on presumption and conjecture. We would sooner go the whole length of the absurdities of craniology, than get into this flatting machine of the original sameness and indiscriminate tendency of men's faculties and dispositions. A painter, of all men, should not give in to any such notion. Does he pretend to see differences in faces, and will he allow none in minds? Or does he make the outline of the head the criterion of a corresponding difference of character, and yet reject all distinction in the original conformation of the soul? Has he never been struck with *family* likenesses? And is there not an inherent, indestructible, and inalienable character to be found in the individuals of such families, answering to this physiognomical identity, even in remote branches, where there has been no communication when young, and where the situation, pursuits, education, and character of the individuals have been totally opposite? Again, do we not find persons with every external advantage without any intellectual superiority, and the greatest prodigies emerge from the greatest obscurity? What made Shakspeare? Not his education as a link boy or a deer stealer. Have there not been thousands of mathematicians, educated like Sir Isaac Newton, who have risen to the rank of senior wranglers, and never been heard of afterwards? Did not Hogarth live in the same age with Hayman? Who will

believe that Highmore could, by any exaggeration of circumstances, have been transformed into Michael Angelo; that Hudson was another Vandyck *incognito*; or that Reynolds would, as our author dreads, have learned to paint like his master, if he had stayed to serve out his apprenticeship with him? The thing was impossible. Hudson had every advantage, as far as Mr Farington's mechanical theory goes (for he was brought up under Richardson), to enable him to break through the trammels of custom, and to raise the degenerate style of art in his day. Why did he not? He had not original force of mind either to inspire him with the conception or to impel him to execute it. Why did Reynolds burst through the cloud that overhung the region of art, and shine out, like the glorious sun, upon his native land? Because he had the genius to do it. It was nature working in him, and forcing its way through all impediments of ignorance and fashion, till it found its native element in undoubted excellence and wide-spread fame. His eye was formed to drink in light, and to absorb the splendid effects of shadowy obscurity; and it gave out what it took in. He had a strong intrinsic perception of grace and expression; and he could not be satisfied with the stiff, formal, inanimate models he saw before him. There are, indeed, certain minds that seem formed as conductors to truth and beauty, as the hardest metals carry off the electric fluid, and round which all examples of excellence, whether in art or nature, play harmless and ineffectual. Reynolds was not one of these; but the instant he saw gorgeous truth in natural objects or artificial models, his mind "darted contagious fire." It is said that he surpassed his servile predecessors by a more diligent study and more careful imitation of nature. But how was he attracted to nature, but by the sympathy of real taste and genius? He also copied the portraits of Gandy, an obscure but excellent artist of his native county. A blockhead would

have copied his master, and despised Gandy ; but Gandy's style of painting satisfied and stimulated his ambition, because he saw nature there. Hudson's made no impression on him, because it presented nothing of the kind. Why, then, did Reynolds perform what he did ? From the force and bias of his genius. Why did he not do more ? Because his natural bias did not urge him farther. As it is the property of genius to find its true level, so it cannot rise above it. He seized upon and naturalised the beauties of Rembrandt and Rubens, because they were connate to his own turn of mind. He did not at first instinctively admire, nor did he ever, with all his professions, make any approach to the high qualities of Raffaele or Michael Angelo, because there was an obvious incompatibility between them. Sir Joshua did not, after all, found a school of his own in general art, because he had not strength of mind for it. But he introduced a better taste for art in this country, because he had great taste himself, and sufficient genius to transplant many of the excellences of others.

Mr Farington takes the trouble to vindicate Sir Joshua's title to be the author of his own Discourses, though this is a subject on which we have never entertained a doubt, and conceive, indeed, that a doubt never could have arisen, but from estimating the talents required for painting too low in the scale of intellect, as something mechanical and fortuitous, and from making literature something exclusive and paramount to all other pursuits. Johnson and Burke were equally unlikely to have had a principal or considerable hand in the Discourses. They have none of the pomp, the vigour, or mannerism of the one, or the boldness, originality, or extravagance of the other. They have all the internal evidence of being Sir Joshua's. They are subdued, mild, unaffected, thoughtful,—containing sensible observations on which he laid too little stress, and vague theories which he was not able to master. There

is the same character of mind in what he wrote, as of eye in what he painted. His style is gentle, flowing, and bland; there is an inefficient outline, with a mellow, felicitous, and delightful filling up. In both the taste predominates over the genius: the manner over the matter! The real groundwork of Sir Joshua's Discourses is to be found in Richardson's Essays.

We proceed to Mr Farington's state of art in this country, a little more than half a century ago, which is no less accurate than it is deplorable: and it may lead us to form a better estimate of the merits of Sir Joshua in rescuing it from this lowest point of degradation, and perhaps assist our conjectures as to its future progress and its present state.

It was the lot of Sir Joshua Reynolds to be destined to pursue the art of painting at a period, when the extraordinary effort he made came with all the force and effect of novelty. He appeared at a time when the art was at its lowest ebb. What might be called an English school had never been formed. All that Englishmen had done was to copy, and endeavour to imitate, the works of eminent men, who were drawn to England from other countries by encouragement, which there was no inducement to bestow upon the inferior efforts of the natives of this island. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, Frederigo Zucchero, an Italian, was much employed in England, as had been Hans Holbein, a native of Basle, in a former reign. Charles the First gave great employment to Rubens and Vandyck. They were succeeded by Sir Peter Lely, a native of Soest in Westphalia; and Sir Godfrey Kneller came from Lubee to be, for a while, Lely's competitor; and after his death, he may be said to have had the whole command of the art in England. He was succeeded by Richardson, the first English painter that stood at the head of portrait painting in this country. Richardson had merit in his profession, but not of a high order;

and it was remarkable, that a man who thought so well on the subject of art, and more especially who practised so long, should not have been able to do more than is manifested in his works. He died in 1745, aged 80. Jervas, the friend of Pope, was his competitor, but very inferior to him. Sir James Thornhill, also, was contemporary with Richardson, and painted portraits; but his reputation was founded upon his historical and allegorical compositions. In St Paul's Cathedral, in the Hospital at Greenwich, and at Hampton Court, his principal works are to be seen. As Richardson in portraits, so Thornhill in history painting, was the first native of this island who stood pre-eminent in the line of art he pursued at the period of his practice. He died in 1732, aged 56.

"Horace Walpole, in his '*Anecdotes of Painting*,' observes, that 'at the accession of George the First the arts were sunk to the lowest state in Britain.' This was not strictly true. Mr Walpole, who published at a later time, should have dated the period of their utmost degradation to have been in the middle of the last century, when the names of Hudson and Hayman were predominant. It is true Hogarth was then well known to the public; but he was less so as a painter than an engraver, though many of his pictures representing subjects of humour and character are excellent; and Hayman, as a history painter, could not be compared with Sir James Thornhill.

"Thomas Hudson was a native of Devonshire. His name will be preserved from his having been the artist to whom Sir Joshua Reynolds was committed for instruction. Hudson was the scholar of Richardson, and married his daughter; and after the death of his father-in-law, succeeded to the chief employment in portrait painting. He was in all respects much below his master in ability, but being esteemed the best artist of his time, commissions flowed in upon him, and his business, as it might truly be termed, was carried on like that of a manufactory. To

his ordinary heads draperies were added by painters who chiefly confined themselves to that line of practice. No time was lost by Hudson in the study of character, or in the search of variety in the position of his figures ; a few formal attitudes served as models for all his subjects ; and the display of arms and hands, being the more difficult parts, was managed with great economy, by all the contrivances of concealment.

“To this scene of imbecile performance Joshua Reynolds was sent by his friends. He arrived in London on the 14th of October 1741, and on the 18th of that month he was introduced to his future preceptor. He was then aged seventeen years and three months. The terms of the agreement were, that provided Hudson approved him, he was to remain four years ; but might be discharged at pleasure. He continued in this situation two years and a half, during which time he drew many heads upon paper ; and in his attempts in painting succeeded so well in a portrait of Hudson’s cook as to excite his master’s jealousy. In this temper of mind Hudson availed himself of a very trifling circumstance to dismiss him. He had one evening ordered Reynolds to take a picture to Van Haaken, the drapery painter, but as the weather proved wet, he postponed carrying it till next morning. At breakfast Hudson demanded why he did not take the picture the evening before ? Reynolds replied, that ‘he delayed it on account of the weather ; but that the picture was delivered that morning before Van Haaken rose from bed.’ Hudson then said, ‘You have not obeyed my orders, and shall not stay in my house.’ On this peremptory declaration, Reynolds urged that he might be allowed time to write to his father, who might otherwise think he had committed some great crime. Hudson, though reproached by his own servant for this unreasonable and violent conduct, persisted in his determination ; accordingly, Reynolds went that day from Hudson’s house to an uncle who resided in

the Temple, and from thence wrote to his father who, after consulting his neighbour Lord Edgcumbe, directed him to come down to Devonshire.

"Thus did our great artist commence his professional career. Two remarks may be made upon this event. First, by quitting Hudson at this early period, he avoided the danger of having his mind and his hand habituated to a mean practice of the art, which, when established, is most difficult to overcome. It has often been observed in the works of artists who thus began their practice, that, though they rose to marked distinction, there have been but few who could wholly divest themselves of the bad effects of a long-continued exercise of the eye and the hand in copying ordinary works. In Hudson's school this was fully manifested. Mortimer and Wright of Derby were his pupils. They were both men of superior talents; but in portraits they never succeeded beyond what would be called mediocre performance. In this line their productions were tasteless and laboured; fortunately, however, they made choice of subjects more congenial with their minds. Mortimer, charmed with the wild spirit of *Salvator Rosa*, made the exploits of lawless banditti the chief subjects of his pencil, while Wright devoted himself to the study of objects viewed by artificial light, and to the beautiful effects of the moon upon landscape scenery; yet even in these, though deserving of great praise, the effects of their early practice were but too apparent; their pictures being uniformly executed with what artists call a heavy hand."

This is a humiliating retrospect for the lovers of art, and of their country. In speculating upon its causes, we are half afraid to hint at the probable effects of climate,—so much is it now the fashion to decry what was once so much over-rated. Our theoretical opinions are directed far more frequently by a spirit of petulant contradiction than of fair inquiry. We detect errors in received systems,

and then run into the contrary extreme to show how wise we are. Thus one folly is driven out by another; and the history of philosophy is little more than an alternation of blind prejudices and shallow paradoxes. Thus climate was everything in the days of Montesquieu, and in our day it is nothing. Yet it was but one of many co-operating causes at first, and it continues to be one still. In all that relates to the senses, physical causes may be allowed to operate very materially, without much violence to experience or probability. "Are the English a musical people?" is a question that has been debated at great length, and in all the forms. But whether the Italians are a musical people is a question not to be asked, any more than whether they have a taste for the fine arts in general. Nor does the subject ever admit of a question, where a faculty or genius for any particular thing exists in the most eminent degree: for then it is sure to show itself, and force its way to the light, in spite of all obstacles. That which no one ever denied to any people, we may be sure they actually possess: that which is as often denied as allowed them, we may be sure they do not possess in a very eminent degree. That to which we make the angriest claim, and dispute the most about, whatever else may be, is not our *forte*. The French are allowed by all the world to be a dancing, talking, cooking people. If the English were to set up the same pretensions, it would be ridiculous. But then they say they have other excellences; and having these, they would have the former too. They think it hard to be set down as a dull, plodding people: but is it not equally hard upon others to be called vain and light? They tell us they are the wisest, the freest, and most moral people on the face of the earth, without the frivolous accomplishments of their neighbours; but they insist upon having these too, to be upon a par in everything with the rest of the world. We have our bards and sages ("better none")

our prose writers, our mathematicians, our inventors in useful and mechanic arts, our legislators, our patriots, our statesmen, and our fighting men, in the field and in the ring:—In these we challenge, and justly, all the world. We are not behind-hand with any people in all that depends on hard thinking and deep and firm feeling, on long heads and stout hearts. But why must we excel also in the reverse of these,—in what depends on lively preceptions, on quick sensibility, and on a voluptuous effeminacy of temperament and character? An Englishman does not ordinarily pretend to combine his own gravity, plainness, and reserve, with the levity, loquacity, grimace, and artificial politeness (as it is called) of a Frenchman. Why, then, will he insist upon engrafting the fine upon the domestic arts, as an indispensable consummation of the national character? We may indeed cultivate them as an experiment in natural history, and produce specimens of them, and exhibit them as rarities in their kind, as we do hothouse plants and shrubs; but they are not of native growth or origin. They do not spring up in the open air, but shrink from the averted eye of heaven, like a Laplander into his hut. They do not sit as graceful ornaments, but as excrescences, on the English character; they are “like flowers in our caps, dying or ere they sicken”—they are exotics and aliens to the soil. We do not import foreigners to dig our canals, or construct our machines, or solve difficult problems in political economy, or write Scotch novels for us,—but we import our dancing masters, our milliners, our Opera our singers, our valets, and our travelling cooks,—as till lately we did our painters and sculptors.

The English (we take it) are a nation with certain decided features and predominating traits of character; and if they have any characteristics at all, this is one of them, that their feelings are internal rather than external, reflex rather than organic,—and that they are more in-

clined to contend with pain than to indulge in pleasure "The stern genius of the North," says Schlegel, "throws men back upon themselves."—The progress of the Fine Arts has hitherto been slow, and wavering, and unpromising in this country, "like the forced pace of a shuffling nag," not like the flight of Pegasus; and their encouragement has been cold and backward in proportion. They have been wooed and won,—as far as they have been won, which is no further than to a mere promise of marriage—"with coy, reluctant, amorous delay." They have not rushed into our embraces, nor been mingled in our daily pastimes and pursuits. It is two hundred and fifty years since this island was civilized to all other intellectual purposes; but, till within half a century, it was a desert and a waste in art. Were there no *terre filii* in those days; no brood of giants to spring out of the ground, and launch the mighty fragments of genius from their hands; to beautify and enrich the public mind; to hang up the lights of the eye and of the soul in pictured halls, in airy porticoes, and solemn temples; to illumine the land, and weave a garland for their own heads, like the "crown which Ariadne wore upon her bridal-day," and which still shines brighter in heaven? There were; but "their affections did not that way tend." They were of the tribe of Issachar, and not of Judah. There were two sisters, Poetry and Painting; one was taken, and the other was left.

Were our ancestors insensible to the charms of nature, to the music of thought, to deeds of virtue or heroic enterprise? No. But they saw them in their mind's eye; they felt them at their heart's core, and there only. They did not translate their perceptions into the language of sense; they did not embody them in visible images, but in breathing words. They were more taken up with what an object suggested to combine with the infinite stores of fancy or trains of feeling, than with the single object

itself; more intent upon the moral inference, the tendency and the result than the appearance of things, however imposing or expressive, at any given moment of time. If their first impressions were less vivid and complete, their after-reflections were combined in a greater variety of striking resemblances, and thus drew a dazzling veil over their merely sensitive impressions, which deadened and neutralized them still more. Will it be denied that there is a wide difference, as to the actual result, between the mind of a Poet and a Painter? Why, then, should not this difference be inherent and original, as it undoubtedly is in individuals, and, to all appearance, in nations? Or why should we be uneasy, because the same country does not teem with all varieties, and with each extreme of excellence and genius?*

In this importunate theory of ours we misconstrue nature, and tax Providence amiss. In that short but delightful season of the year, and in that part of the country where we now write, there are wild woods and banks covered with primroses and hyacinths for miles together, so that you cannot put your foot between, and with a gaudy show "empurpling all the ground," and branches loaded with nightingales whose leaves tremble with their liquid notes; yet the air does not resound, as in happier climes, with shepherd's pipe or roundelay, nor are the village maids adorned with wreaths of vernal flowers, ready to weave the braided dance, or "returning with a choral song, when evening has gone down." What is the reason? "We also are *not* Arcadians!" We have

* We are aware that time conquers even nature, and that the characters of nations change with a total change of circumstances. The modern Italians are a very different race of people from the ancient Romans. This gives us some chance. In the decomposition and degeneracy of the sturdy old English character, which seems fast approaching, the mind and muscles of the country may be sufficiently relaxed and softened to imbibe a taste for all the refinements of luxury and show; and a century of slavery may yield us a crop of the fine arts, to be soon buried in sloth and barbarism again.

not the same animal vivacity, the same tendency to external delight and show, the same ear for melting sounds, the same pride of the eye or voluptuousness of the heart. The senses and the mind are differently constituted; and the outward influences of things: climate, mode of life, national customs and character, have all a share in producing the general effect. We should say that the eye in warmer climates drinks in greater pleasure from external sights, is more open and porous to them, as the ear is to sounds; that the sense of immediate delight is fixed deeper in the beauty of the object; that the greater life and animation of character gives a greater spirit and intensity of expression to the face, making finer subjects for history and portrait; and that the circumstances, in which a people are placed in a genial atmosphere, are more favourable to the study of nature and of the human form. Claude could only have painted his landscapes in the open air; and the Greek statues were little more than copies from living, every-day forms.

Such a natural aptitude and relish for the impressions of sense gives not only more facility, but leads to greater patience, refinement, and perfection in the execution of works of art. What our own artists do is often up-hill work, against the grain;—not persisted in and brought to a conclusion for the love of the thing; but, after the first dash, after the subject is got in, and the gross general effect produced, they grudge all the rest of their labour as a waste of time and pains. Their object is not to look at nature but to have their picture exhibited and sold. The want of intimate sympathy with, and entire repose on, nature not only leaves their productions hard, violent, and crude, but frequently renders them impatient, wavering, and dissatisfied with their own work of art, and never easy till they get into a different or higher one, where they think they can earn more money or fame with less trouble. By beginning over again, by having the same preliminary

ground to go over, with new subjects or bungling experiments, they seldom arrive at that nice, nervous point that trembles on perfection. This last stage, in which art is, as it were, identified with nature, an English painter shrinks from with strange repugnance and peculiar abhorrence. The French style is the reverse of ours; it is all dry finishing without effect. We see their faults, and, as we conceive, their general incapacity for art; but we cannot be persuaded to see our own.

The want of encouragement, which is sometimes set up as an all-sufficient plea, will hardly account for this slow and irregular progress of English art. There was no premium offered for the production of dramatic excellence in the age of Elizabeth; there was no society for the encouragement of works of wit and humour in the reign of Charles II.; no committee of taste ever voted Congreve, or Steele, or Swift, a silver vase or a gold medal for their comic vein; Hogarth was not fostered in the annual exhibitions of the Royal Academy. In plain truth that is not the way in which that sort of harvest is produced. The seeds must be sown in the mind; there is a fulness of the blood, a plethoric habit of thought, that breaks out with the first opportunity on the surface of society. Poetry has sprung up indigenously, spontaneously, at all times of our history and under all circumstances, with or without encouragement; it is therefore a rich natural product of the mind of the country, unforced, unpampered, unsophisticated. It is obviously and entirely genuine, "the unbought grace of life." If it be asked, why Painting has all this time kept back, has not dared to show its face, or retired ashamed of its poverty and deformity, the answer is plain—because it did not shoot out with equal vigour and luxuriance from the soil of English genius—because it was not the native language and idiom of the country. Why, then, are we bound to suppose that it will shoot up now to an unequalled height—why are we confidently told

and required to predict to others that it is about to produce wonders, when we see no such thing; when these very persons tell us that there has been hitherto no such thing, but that it must and shall be revealed in their time and persons? And though they complain that that public patronage which they invoke, and which they pretend is alone wanting to produce the high and palmy state of art to which they would have us look forward, is entirely and scandalously withheld from it, and likely to be so!

We turn from this subject to another not less melancholy or singular,—from the imperfect and abortive attempts at art in this country formerly to its present state of degeneracy and decay in Italy. Speaking of Sir Joshua's arrival at Rome in the year 1749, Mr Farington indulges in the following remarks:—

“On his arrival at Rome, he found Pompeo Battoni, a native of Lucca, possessing the highest reputation. His name was, indeed, known in every part of Europe, and was everywhere spoken of as almost another Raffaele; but in that great school of art such was the admiration he excited, or rather such was the degradation of taste, that the students in painting had no higher ambition than to be his imitators.

“Battoni had some talent, but his works are dry, cold, and insipid. That such performances should have been so extolled in the very seat and centre of the fine arts, seems wonderful. But in this manner has public taste been operated upon; and from the period, when art was carried to the highest point of excellence known in modern times, it has thus gradually declined. A succession of artists followed each other who, being esteemed the most eminent in their own time, were praised extravagantly by an ignorant public; and in the several schools they established their own productions were the only objects of study.

“So widely spread was the fame of Battoni, that, before

Reynolds left England, his patron, Lord Edgcumbe, strongly urged the expediency of placing himself under the tuition of so great a man. This recommendation, however, on seeing the works of that master, he did not choose to follow, which showed that he was then above the level of those whose professional views all concentrated in the productions of the popular favourite. Indeed nothing could be more opposite to the spirited execution, the high relish of colour, and powerful effect, which the works of Reynolds at that time possessed, than the tame and inanimate pictures of Pompeo Battoni. Taking a wiser course, therefore, he formed his own plan, and studied chiefly in the Vatican, from the works of Michael Angelo, Raffaele, and Andrea del Sarto, with great diligence; such indeed was his application, that to a severe cold, which he caught in those apartments, he owed the deafness which continued during the remainder of his life."

This account may serve to show that Italy is no longer Italy; why it is so, is a question of greater difficulty. The soil, the climate, the religion, the people are the same; and the men and women in the streets of Rome still look as if they had walked out of Raffaele's pictures; but there is no Raffaele to paint them, nor does any Leo arise to encourage them. This seems to prove that the perfection of art is the destruction of art; that the models of this kind, by their accumulation, block up the path of genius; and that all attempts at distinction lead, after a certain period, to a mere lifeless copy of what has been done before, or a vapid, distorted, and extravagant caricature of it. This is but a poor prospect for those who set out late in art, and who have all the excellence of their predecessors, and all the fastidious refinements of their own taste, the temptations of indolence, and the despair of vanity, to distract and encumber their efforts. The artists, who revel in the luxuries of

genius thus prepared by their predecessors, clog their wings with the honeyed sweets, and get drunk with the intoxicating nectar. They become servitors and lacqueys to Art, not devoted servants of Nature ;—the fluttering, foppish, lazy, retinue of some great name. The contemplation of unattainable excellence casts a film over their eyes, and unnerves their hands. They look on, and do nothing. In Italy it costs them a month to paint a hand, a year an eye ; the feeble pencil drops from their grasp, while they wonder to see an Englishman make a hasty copy of the Transfiguration, turn over a portfolio of Piranesi's drawings for their next historical design, and read Winckelman on *virtù* ! We do much the same here, in all our collections and exhibitions of modern or ancient paintings, and of the Elgin marbles, to boot. A picture gallery serves very well for a place to lounge in, and talk about, but it does not make the student go home and set heartily to work ; he would rather come again and lounge and talk the next day, and the day after that. He cannot do *all* that he sees there, and less will not satisfy his expansive and refined ambition. He would be all the painters that ever were—or none. His indolence combines with his vanity, like alternate doses of provocatives and sleeping-draughts. He copies, however, a favourite picture (though he thinks copying bad in general)—or makes a chalk-drawing of it—or gets some one else to do it for him. We might go on ; but we have written what many people will call a lampoon already !

There is another view of the subject more favourable and encouraging to ourselves, and yet not immeasurably so, when all circumstances are considered. All that was possible had been formerly done for art in Italy, so that nothing more was left to be done. That is not the case with us yet. Perfection is not the insurmountable obstacle to *our* success ; we have enough to do, if we knew how. That is some inducement to proceed. We can hardly be

retrograde in our course. But there is a difficulty in the way,—no less than our Establishment in Church and State. Rome was the capital of the Christian and of the civilized world. Her mitre swayed the sceptres of the earth, and the Servant of Servants set his foot on the neck of kings, and deposed sovereigns with the signet of the Fisherman. She was the eye of the world, and her word was a law. She set herself up, and said, “All eyes shall see me, and all knees shall bow to me.” She ruled in the hearts of the people by dazzling their senses, and making them drunk with hopes and fears. She held in her hands the keys of the other world to open or shut; and she displayed all the pomp, the trappings, and the pride of this. Homage was paid to the persons of her ministers; her worship was adorned and made alluring by every appeal to the passions and imaginations of its followers. Art was rendered tributary to the support of this grand engine of power, and Painting was employed, as soon as its fascination was felt, to aid the devotion and rivet the faith of the Catholic believer. Thus religion was made subservient to interest, and art was called in to aid in the service of this ambitious religion. The patron-saint of every church stood at the head of his altar; the meekness of love, the innocence of childhood, “amazing brightness, purity, and truth,” breathed from innumerable representations of the Virgin and Child; and the Vatican was covered with the acts and processions of Popes and Cardinals, of Christ and the Apostles. The churches were filled with these objects of art and of devotion; the very walls spoke. “A present deity they shout around; a present deity the walls and vaulted roofs rebound.” This unavoidably put in requisition all the strength of genius and all the resources of enthusiastic feeling in the country. The spectator sympathized with the artist’s inspiration. No elevation of thought, no refinement of expression, could outgo the expectation of the thronging votaries. The fancy of

the painter was but a spark kindled from the glow of public sentiment. This was a sort of patronage worth having. The zeal, and enthusiasm, and industry of native genius was stimulated to works worthy of such encouragement, and in unison with its own feelings. But by degrees the tide ebbed; the current was dried up, or became stagnant. The churches were all supplied with altarpieces; the niches were full, not only with scriptural subjects, but with the stories of every saint enrolled in the calendar, or registered in legendary lore. No more pictures were wanted—and then it was found that there were no more painters to do them! The art languished, and gradually disappeared. They could not take down the Madonna of Foligno, or new-stucco the ceiling at Parma, that other artists might undo what Raffaele and Correggio had done. Some of them, to be sure, did follow this desperate course, and spent their time, as in the case of Leonardo's Last Supper at Milan, in painting over—that is, in defacing the works of their predecessors. Afterwards, they applied themselves to landscape and classical subjects with great success for a time, as we see in Claude and N. Poussin, but the original *state* impulse was gone.

What confirms the foregoing account is, that at Venice and other places out of the more immediate superintendence of the Papal See, though there also sacred subjects were in great request, yet the art being patronized by rich merchants and nobles, took a more decided turn to portraits;—magnificent indeed, and hitherto unrivalled, for the beauty of the costume, the character of the faces, and the marked pretensions of the persons who sat for them,—but still widely remote from that public and national interest that it assumed in the Roman school. We see, in like manner, that painting in Holland and Flanders took yet a different direction; was mostly scenic and ornamental, or confined to local and personal subjects. Rubens's pictures, for example, differ from Raffaele's by a

total want of religious enthusiasm and studied refinement of expression, even where the subjects are the same; and Rembrandt's portraits differ from Titian's in the grossness, and want of animation and dignity, of his characters. There was an inherent difference in the look of a Doge of Venice or one of the Medici family, and that of a Dutch burgomaster. The climate had affected the picture through the character of the sitter, as it affected the genius of the artist (if not otherwise) through the class of subjects he was constantly called upon to paint. What turn painting has lately taken, or is likely to take with us, now remains to be seen.

With the Memoirs of Sir Joshua Mr Farington very properly connects the history of the institution of the Royal Academy, from which he dates the hopes and origin of all sound art in this country. There is here at first sight an inversion of the usual order of things. The institution of academies in most countries has been coeval with the decline of art; in ours, it seems, it is the har-binger and main prop of its success. Mr Farington thus traces the outline of this part of his subject with the enthusiasm of an artist and the fidelity of a historian.

"At this period (1760), a plan was formed by the artists of the metropolis to draw the attention of their fellow-citizens to their ingenious labours, with a view both to an increase of patronage and the cultivation of taste. Hitherto works of that kind produced in the country were seen only by a few; the people in general knew nothing of what was passing in the arts. Private collections were then inaccessible, and there were no public ones; nor any casual display of the productions of genius, except what the ordinary sales by auction occasionally offered. Nothing, therefore, could exceed the ignorance of a people who were in themselves learned, ingenious, and highly cultivated in all things, excepting the arts of design.

"In consequence of this privation, it was conceived

that a Public Exhibition of the works of the most eminent Artists could not fail to make a powerful impression; and if occasionally repeated, might ultimately produce the most satisfactory effects. The scheme was no sooner proposed than adopted; and being carried into immediate execution, the result exceeded the most sanguine expectations of the projectors. All ranks of people crowded to see the delightful novelty; it was the universal topic of conversation; and a passion for the arts was excited by that first manifestation of native talent which, cherished by the continued operation of the same cause, has ever since been increasing in strength, and extending its effects through every part of the empire.

“The history of our Exhibitions affords itself the strongest evidence of their impressive effect upon public taste. At their commencement, though men of enlightened minds could distinguish and appreciate what was excellent, the admiration of the many was confined to subjects either gross or puerile, and commonly to the meanest efforts of intellect; whereas, at this time, the whole train of subjects most popular in the earlier exhibitions have disappeared. The loaf and cheese, that could provoke hunger, the cat and canary bird, and the dead mackerel on a deal board, have long ceased to produce astonishment and delight; while truth of imitation now finds innumerable admirers, though combined with the high qualities of beauty, grandeur, and taste.

“To our Public Exhibitions, and to arrangements that followed in consequence of their introduction, this change must be chiefly attributed. The present generation appears to be composed of a new and, at least with respect to the arts, a superior order of beings. Generally speaking, their thoughts, their feelings, and language on these subjects differ entirely from what they were sixty years ago. No just opinions were at that time entertained on the merits of ingenious productions of this kind. The state of the

public mind, incapable of discriminating excellence from inferiority, proves incontrovertibly that a right sense of art in the spectator can only be acquired by long and frequent observation; and that, without proper opportunities to improve the mind and the eye, a nation would continue insensible of the true value of the fine arts.

"The first, or probationary, Exhibition which opened April 21st, 1760, was at a large room in the Strand, belonging to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, which had then been instituted five or six years. It is natural to conclude that the first artist in the country was not indifferent to the success of a plan which promised to be so extensively useful. Accordingly, four of his pictures were for the first time here placed before the public, with whom, by the channel now opened, he continued in constant intercourse as long as he lived.

"Encouraged by the successful issue of the first experiment, the artistical body determined that it should be repeated the following year. Owing, however, to some inconveniences experienced at their former place of exhibition, and also to a desire to be perfectly independent in their proceedings, they engaged, for their next public display, a spacious room near the Spring Gardens' entrance into the Park; at which place the second Exhibition opened, May 9th, 1761. Here Reynolds sent his fine picture of Lord Ligonier on horseback, a portrait of the Rev. Laurence Sterne, and three others. . . .

"The artists had now fully proved the efficacy of their plan; and their income exceeding their expenditure, affording a reasonable hope of a permanent establishment, they thought they might solicit a Royal Charter of Incorporation; and having applied to his Majesty for that purpose, he was pleased to accede to their request. This measure, however, which was intended to consolidate the

body of artists, was of no avail ; on the contrary, it was probably the cause of its dissolution ; for in less than four years a separation took place, which led to the establishment of the Royal Academy, and finally to the extinction of the incorporated Society. The charter was dated January 26th, 1765 ; the secession took place in October, 1768 ; and the Royal Academy was instituted December 10th in the same year."

On this statement we must be allowed to make a few remarks. First, the four greatest names in English art, Hogarth, Reynolds, Wilson,* and West, were not formed by the Academy, but were formed before it ; and the first gave it as his opinion that it would be a death-blow to the art. He considered an Academy as a school for servile mediocrity, a hotbed for cabal and dirty competition, and a vehicle for the display of idle pretensions and empty parade.

Secondly, we agree with the writer as to the deplorable state of the art, and of the public taste in general, which, at the period in question, (1760) was as gross as it was insipid ; but we do not think that it has been improved so much since, as Mr Farington is willing to suppose ; nor that the Academy has taken more than *half measures* for improving or refining it.

" They found it poor at first, and kept it so. "

They have attended to their own interests, and flattered their customers, while they have neglected or cajoled the public. They may indeed look back with triumph and pity to " the cat and canary bird, the dead mackerel and deal board ; " but they seem to rest satisfied with this conquest over themselves, and, " leaving the things that are behind, have not pressed forward (with equal ardour) to the things that are before. " Theirs is a very moderate, not a radical, reform in this respect. We do *not* find, even in

* This name, for some reason or other, does not once occur in these Memoirs.

the latest exhibitions at Somerset House, "innumerable examples of truth of imitation, combined with the high qualities of beauty, grandeur, and taste." The mass of the pictures exhibited there are *not* calculated to give the English people a true notion, not merely of high art (as it is emphatically called), but of the genuine objects of art at all. We do not believe—to take a plain test of the progress we have made—that nine-tenths of the persons who go there annually, and who go through the Catalogue regularly, would know a Guido from a daub—the finest picture from one not badly executed perhaps, but done in the worst taste, and on the falsest principles. The vast majority of the pictures received there, and hung up in the most conspicuous places, are pictures painted to please the natural vanity or fantastic ignorance of the artist's sitters, their friends and relations, and to lead to more commissions for half and whole lengths—or else pictures painted purposely to be seen in the Exhibition, to strike across the Great Room, to catch attention, and force admiration, in the distraction and dissipation of a thousand foolish faces and new gilt frames, by gaudy colouring and meretricious grace. We appeal to any man of judgment, whether this is not a brief, but true summary, of "the annual show" at the Royal Academy? And is this the way to advance the interests of art, or to fashion the public taste? There is not one head in ten painted as a study from nature, or with a view to bring out the real qualities of the mind or countenance. If there is any such improvident example of unfashionable sincerity, it is put out of countenance by the prevailing tone of *rouged* and smiling folly and affectation all around it.

The only pictures painted in any quantity as studies from nature, free from the glosses of sordid art and the tincture of vanity, are *portraits of places*; and it cannot be denied that there are many of these that have a true and powerful look of nature. But then, as if this was a matter of great indifference, and nobody's business to see to, they

are seldom anything more than bare sketches, hastily got up for the chance of a purchaser, and left unfinished to save time and trouble. They are not, in general, lofty conceptions or selections of beautiful scenery, but mere common out-of-door views, relying for their value on their literal fidelity; and where, consequently, the exact truth and perfect identity of the imitation is the more indispensable. Our countryman, Wilkie, in scenes of domestic and familiar life, is equally deserving of praise for the arrangement of his subjects, and care in the execution; but we have to lament that he too is in some degree chargeable with that fickleness and desultoriness in the pursuit of excellence, which we have noticed above as incident to our native artists, and which, we think, has kept him stationary, instead of being progressive, for some years past. He appeared at one time as if he was near touching the point of perfection in his peculiar department; and he *may* do it yet! But how small a part do his works form of the Exhibition, and how unlike all the rest!

It was the panic-fear that all this daubing and varnishing would be seen through, and the scales fall off from the eyes of the public, in consequence of the exhibition of some of the finest specimens of the Old Masters at the British Institution, that called into clandestine notoriety that disgraceful production, the *Catalogue Raisonné*. The concealed authors of that work conceived that a discerning public would learn more of the art from the simplicity, dignity, force, and truth of these admired and lasting models in a short season or two, than they had done from the Exhibitions of the Royal Academy for the last fifty years; that they would see that it did not consist entirely in tints and varnishes, and megilps and washes for the skin, but that all the effects of colours and charms of expression might be united with purity of tone, with articulate forms and exquisite finishing. They saw this conviction rapidly taking place in the public mind, and they shrank back

from it "with jealous leer malign." They persuaded themselves, and had the courage to try to persuade others, that to exhibit approved specimens of art in general, selected from the works of the most famous and accomplished masters, was to destroy the germ of native art ; was cruelly to strangle the growing taste and enthusiasm of the public for art in its very birth ; was to blight the well-earned reputation, and strike at the honest livelihood of the liberal professors of the school of painting in England. They therefore set to work to decry these productions as worthless and odious in the sight of the true adept ; they smeared over with every epithet of low abuse works and names sacred to fame, and to generations to come ; they spared no pains to heap ridicule and obloquy on those who had brought these works forward ; they did everything to disgust and blind the public to their excellence, by showing in themselves a hatred and a loathing of all high excellence and of all established reputation in art, in which their paltry vanity and mercenary spite were not concerned. They proved, beyond all contradiction, that to keep back the taste of the town and the knowledge of the student to the point to which *the Academy* had found it practicable to conduct it by its example, was the object of a powerful and active party of professional intriguers in this country. If the Academy had any hand, directly or indirectly, in this unprincipled outrage upon taste and decency, they ought to be disfranchised (like Grampound) to morrow, as utterly unworthy of the trust reposed in them.

The alarm indeed (in one sense) was not unfounded ; for many persons who had long been dazzled, not illumined, by the glare of the most modern and fashionable productions, began to open their eyes to the beauties and loveliness of painting, and to see reflected there, as in a mirror, those hues, those expressions, those transient and heavenly glances of nature, which had often charmed their own minds, but of which they could find the traces nowhere else, and became

true worshippers at the shrine of genuine art. Whether this taste will spread beyond the immediate gratification of the moment, or stimulate the rising generation to new efforts, and to the adoption of a new and purer style, is another question ; with regard to which, for reasons above explained, we are not very sanguine.

We have a great respect for *high* art, and an anxiety for its advancement and cultivation ; but we have a greater still for the advancement and encouragement of *true* art. That is the first and the last step. The knowledge of what is contained in nature is the only foundation of legitimate art ; and the perception of beauty and power, in whatever objects or in whatever degree they subsist, is the test of real genius. The principle is the same in painting an archangel's or a butterfly's wing ; and the very finest picture in the finest collection may be one of a very common subject. We speak and think of Rembrandt as Rembrandt, of Raffaele as Raffaele, not of the one as a portrait, of the other as a history, painter. Portrait may become history, or history portrait, as the one or the other gives the soul or the mask of the face. "*That is true history,*" said an eminent critic, on seeing Titian's picture of Pope Julius II. and his two nephews. He who should set down Claude as a mere landscape painter, must know nothing of what Claude was in himself ; and those who class Hogarth as a painter of low life, only show their ignorance of human nature. High art does not consist in high or epic subjects, but in the manner of treating those subjects ; and that manner among us, as far as we have proceeded, has, we think, been false and exceptionable. We appeal from the common cant on this subject to the Elgin marbles. They are high art confessedly : but they are also true art, in our sense of the word. They do not deviate from truth and nature in order to arrive at a fancied superiority to truth and nature. They do not represent a vapid abstraction, but the entire, undoubted, concrete object they profess to imitate. They

are like casts of the finest living forms in the world, taken in momentary action. They are nothing more ; and therefore certain great critics who had been educated in the ideal school of art, think nothing of them. They do not conform to a vague, unmeaning standard, made out of the fastidious likings or dislikings of the artist ; they are carved out of the living, imperishable forms of nature, as the marble of which they are composed was hewn from its native rock. They contain the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. We cannot say so much of the general style of history painting in this country, which has proceeded, as a first principle, on the determined and deliberate dereliction of living nature, both as means and end. Grandeur was made to depend on leaving out the details. Ideal grace and beauty were made to consist in neutral forms, and character, and expression. The first could produce nothing but slovenliness ; the second, nothing but insipidity. The Elgin marbles have proved by ocular demonstration, that the utmost freedom and grandeur of style is compatible with the minutest details,—the variety of the subordinate parts not destroying the masses in the productions of art more than in those of nature. Grandeur without softness and precision is only another name for grossness. These invaluable fragments of antiquity have also proved beyond dispute, that ideal beauty and historic truth do not consist in middle or *average* forms, &c., but in harmonious outlines, in unity of action, and in the utmost refinement of character and expression. We there see art following close in the footsteps of nature, and exalted, raised, refined with it to the utmost extent that either was capable of. With us all this has been reversed ; and we have discarded nature at first, only to flounder about and be lost in a Limbo of Vanity. With them invention rose from the ground of imitation ; with us, the boldness of the invention was acknowledged in proportion as no traces of imitation were discoverable. Our greatest and most suc-

cessful candidates in the epic walk of art have been those who founded their pretensions to be history-painters on their not being portrait-painters. They could not paint that which they had seen, and therefore they must be qualified to paint that which they had not seen. There was not any one part of any one of their pictures good for anything; and therefore the whole was grand, and an example of lofty art! There was not, in all probability, a single head in an acre of canvas that, taken by itself, was more than a worthless daub, scarcely fit to be hung up as a sign at an ale-house door; but a hundred of these bad portraits or wretched caricatures made by numerical addition an admirable historical picture! The faces, hands, eyes, feet, had neither beauty, nor expression, nor drawing, nor colouring; and yet the composition and arrangement of these abortive and crude materials, which might as well or better have been left blanks, display the mind of the great master. Not one tone, one line, one look for the eye to dwell upon with pure and intense delight, in all this endless scope of subject and field of canvas.

We cannot say that we in general like very large pictures; for this reason that, like overgrown men, they are apt to be bullies and cowards. They profess a great deal, and perform little. They are often a contrivance, not to display magnificent conceptions to the greatest advantage, but to throw the spectator to a distance, where it is impossible to distinguish either gross faults or real beauties.

The late Mr West's pictures were admirable for the composition and grouping. In these respects they could not be better; as we see in the print of the death of General Wolfe; but for the rest, he might as well have set up a parcel of figures in wood, and painted them over with a sign post brush, and then copied what he saw, and it would have been just as good. His skill in drawing was confined to a knowledge of mechanical proportions and measurements and was not guided in the line of beauty, or

employed to give force to expression. He, however, laboured long and diligently to advance the interests of art in this his adopted country ; and if he did not do more, it was the fault of the coldness and formality of his genius, not of the man. Barry was another instance of those who scorn nature, and are scorned by her. He could not make a likeness of any one object in the universe ; when he attempted it, he was like a drunken man on horseback ; his eye reeled, his hand refused its office—and accordingly he set up for an example of the great style in art which, like charity, covers all other defects. It would be unfair at the same time to deny that some of the figures and groups in his picture of the Olympic Games, in the Adelphi, are beautiful designs after the antique, as far as outline is concerned. In colour and expression they are like wild Indians. The other pictures of his there are not worthy of notice ; except as warnings to the misguided student who would scale the high and abstracted steep of art, without following the path of nature. Yet Barry was a man of genius, and an enthusiastic lover of his art. But he unfortunately mistook his ardent aspiration after excellence for the power to achieve it ; assumed the capacity to execute the greatest works instead of acquiring it ; supposed that “ the bodiless creations of his brain ” were to start out from the walls of the Adelphi like a dream or a fairy tale ;—and the result has been, that all the splendid illusions of his undigested ambition have, “ like the baseless fabric of a vision, left not a wrack behind.” His name is not a light or beacon, but a by-word and an ill omen in art. What he has left behind him in writing on the subject contains much real feeling and interesting thought. Mr Fuseli is another distinguished artist who complains that nature puts him out. But his distortions and vagaries are German, and not English ; they lie like a night-mare on the breast of our native art. They are too recondite, obscure, and extravagant for us ; we only want to get over the ground with large clumsy strides, as

fast as we can ; and do not go out of our way in search of absurdity. We cannot consider his genius as naturalised among us, after the lapse of more than half a century ; and if in saying this we do not pay him a compliment, we certainly do not intend it as a very severe censure. Mr Fuseli has wit and words at will ; and though he had never touched a pencil, would be a man of extraordinary pretensions and talents.

Mr Haydon is a young artist of great promise, and much ardour and energy ; and has lately painted a picture which has carried away universal admiration. Without wishing to detract from that tribute of deserved applause, we may be allowed to suggest (and with no unfriendly voice) that he has there, in our judgment, laid in the groundwork, and raised the scaffolding, of a noble picture ; but no more. There is spirit, conception, force, and effect ; but all this is done by the first going over of the canvas. It is the foundation, not the superstructure of a first-rate work of art. It is a rude outline, a striking and masterly sketch.

Milton has given us a description of the growth of a plant—

“ So from the root

Springs lighter the green stalk ; from thence the leaves
More airy ; last the bright consummate flower.”

And we think this image might be transferred to the slow and perfect growth of works of imagination. We have in the present instance the rough materials, the solid substance and the glowing spirit of art ; and only want the last finishing and patient working up. Does Mr Haydon think this too much to bestow on works designed to breathe the air of immortality, and to shed the fragrance of thought on a distant age ? Does he regard it as beneath him to do what Raffaele has done ? We repeat it, here are bold contrasts, distinct grouping, a vigorous hand, and striking conceptions. What remains, then, but that he should add to bold contrasts fine gradations—to masculine drawing nice in-

flections,—to vigorous pencilling those softened and trembling hues which hover like air on the canvas,—to massy and prominent grouping the exquisite finishing of every face and figure, nerve and artery, so as to have each part instinct with life and thought and sentiment, and to produce an impression in the spectator not only that he can touch the actual substance, but that it would shrink from the touch ! In a word, Mr Haydon has strength ; we would wish him to add to it refinement. Till he does this, he will not remove the common stigma on British Art. Nor do we ask impossibilities of him ; we only ask him to make that a leading principle in his pictures, which he has followed so happily in parts. Let him take his own “ Penitent Girl ” as a model,—paint up to this standard through all the rest of the figures, and we shall be satisfied. His Christ in the present picture we do not like, though in this we have no less an authority against us than Mrs Siddons. Mr Haydon has gone at much length into a description of his idea of this figure in the catalogue, which is a practice we disapprove ; for it deceives the artist himself, and may mislead the public. In the idea he conveys to us from the canvas, there can be no deception. Mr Haydon is a devoted admirer of the Elgin marbles ; and he has taken advantage of their breadth and size, and masses. We would urge him to follow them also into their details, their involved graces, the texture of the skin, the indication of a vein or muscle, the waving line of beauty, their calm and motionless expression—into all in which they follow nature. But to do this, he must go to nature and study her more and more, in the greatest and the smallest things. In short, we wish to see this artist paint a picture (he has now every motive to exertion and improvement), where we shall not only have a striking and imposing effect in the aggregate, but where the impression of the whole shall be the joint and irresistible effect of the value of every part. This is our notion of fine art, which we offer to him, not by the

way of disparagement or discouragement, but to do our best to promote the cause of truth and the emulation of the highest excellence.

We had quite forgotten the chief object of Mr Farington's book, Sir Joshua's dispute with the Academy about Mr Bonomi's election; and it is too late to return to it now. We think, however, that Sir Joshua was in the right, and the Academy in the wrong; but we must refer those who require our reasons to Mr Farington's account; who, though he differs from us in his conclusion, has given the facts too fairly to justify any other opinion. He has also some excellent observations on the increasing respectability of artists in society, from which, and from various other passages of his work, we are inclined to infer that, on subjects not relating to the Academy, he would be a sensible, ingenious, and liberal writer.

ON ORIGINALITY.

ORIGINALITY is any conception of things taken immediately from nature, and neither borrowed from, nor common to, others. To deserve this appellation, the copy must be both true and new. But herein lies the difficulty of reconciling a seeming contradiction in the terms of the explanation. For as anything to be natural must be referable to a consistent principle, and as the face of things is open and familiar to all, how can any imitation be new and striking, without being liable to the charge of extravagance, distortion, and singularity? And on the other hand, if it has no such peculiar and distinguishing characteristic to set it off, it cannot properly rise above the level of the trite and commonplace. This objection would indeed hold good, and be unanswerable, if nature were one thing, or if the eye or mind comprehended the whole of it at a single glance; in which case, if an object had been once seen and copied in the most curious and mechanical way, there could be no further addition to, or variation from, this idea without obliquity and affectation. But nature presents an endless variety of aspects, of which the mind seldom takes in more than a part or than one view at a time, and it is in seizing on this unexplored variety, in giving some one of these new but easily recognised features in its characteristic essence, and according to the peculiar bent and force of the artist's genius, that true originality consists. Romney, when he was first introduced into Sir Joshua's gallery, said, "there was something in his portraits which had never been seen in the art before, but which every one must be struck with as true and natural the moment he saw it." This could not happen if the human face did not admit of being contemplated in

several points of view, or if the hand were necessarily faithful to the suggestion of sense. Two things serve to perplex this question : first, the construction of language, from which, as one object is represented by one word, we imagine that it is one thing, and that we can no more conceive differently of the same object than we can pronounce the same word in different ways, without being wrong in all but one of them. Secondly, the very nature of our individual impressions puts a deception upon us; for as we know no more of any given object than we see, we very pardonably conclude that we see the whole of it and have exhausted inquiry at the first view, since we can never suspect the existence, of that which from our ignorance and incapacity gives us no intimation of itself. Thus, if we are shown an exact likeness of a face, we give the artist credit chiefly for dexterity of hand; we think that any one who has eyes can see a face; that one person sees it just like another, that there can be no mistake about it (as the object and the image are in our notions the same)—and that if there is any departure from our version of it, it must be purely fantastical and arbitrary: *multum abludit imago*. We do not look beyond the surface, or rather we do not see into the surface, which contains a labyrinth of difficulties and distinctions that not all the effects of time, of art, of patience, and study can master or unfold. But let us take this self evident proposition, the human face, and examine it a little, and we shall soon be convinced what a Proteus, what an inexplicable riddle it is! Ask any one who thinks he has a perfect idea of the face of his friend, what the shape of his nose or any other feature is, and he will presently find his mistake; ask a lover to draw his ‘mistress’s eyebrow,’ it is not merely that his hand will fail him, but his memory is at fault both for the form and colour; he may indeed dream and tell you with the poet, that

“Grace is in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love;”

but if he wishes to embody his favourite conceit, and to con-

vince any one else of all this by proof positive, he must borrow the painter's aid. When a young artist first begins to make a study from a head, it is well known that he has soon done, because after he has got in a certain general outline and rude masses, as the forehead, the nose, the eyes, in a general way, he sees no further, and is obliged to stop; he feels in truth that he has made a very indifferent copy, but is quite at a loss how to supply the defect. After a few months, or a year or two's practice, if he has a real eye for nature, and a turn for the art, he can spend whole days in working up the smallest details, in correcting the preparations, in reflecting the gradations, and does not know when to leave off, till night closes in upon him, and then he sits musing and gazing in the twilight at what remains for his next day's work. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say, that if he were not to finish any one of his pictures till he saw nothing more to be done to it, he should never leave off. Titian wrote on his pictures *faciebat*, as much as to say, that he was about them, but that it was an endless task. As the mind advances in the knowledge of nature, the horizon of art enlarges, and the air refines. Then, in addition to an infinity of details even in the most common object there is the variety of form and of colour, of light and shade, of character and expression, of the voluptuous, the thoughtful, the grand, the graceful, the grave, the gay, the *I know not what*; which are all to be found (separate or combined) in nature, and which sufficiently account for the diversity of art, and to detect and carry off the *spolia opima* of which is the highest praise of human skill and genius.

“Whatever Lorraine light-touched with softening hue,
Or savage Rosa dashed, or learned Poussin drew,”

all that we meet with in the master-pieces of taste and genius, is to be found in the previous capacity of nature; and man, instead of adding to the store, or *creating* anything, either as to matter or manner, can only draw out a

feeble and imperfect transcript, bit by bit, and one appearance after another, according to the peculiar aptitude and affinity that subsists between his mind and some one part. The mind resembles a prism, which collects the various rays of truth, and displays them by different modes and in several parcels. Enough has been said to vindicate both conditions of originality, which distinguish it from irregularity on the one hand, and from vulgarity on the other; and to show how a thing may at the same time be both true and new. This novel truth is brought out, when it meets with a strong congenial mind, that is, with a mind in the highest degree susceptible of a certain class of impressions, or of a certain kind of beauty and power; and this peculiar strength, congeniality, truth of imagination, or command over a certain part of nature, is, in other words, what is meant by genius. This will serve to show why original inventors have in general (and except in what is mechanical) left so little for their followers to improve upon; for as the original invention implies the utmost stretch and felicity of thought, or the greatest strength and sagacity to discover and dig the ore from the mine of truth, so it is hardly to be expected that a greater degree of capacity should ever arise (than the highest)—that a greater master should be afterwards obtained in shaping and fashioning the precious materials than in the first heat and eagerness of discovery; or that, if the capacity were equal, the same scope and opportunity would be left for its exercise in the same field. If the genius were different, it would then seek different objects and a different vent, and open paths to fame and excellence instead of treading in old ones. Hence the well-known observation that, in each particular style or class of art, the greatest works of genius are the earliest. Hence often the first productions of men of genius are their best. What was that something which Romney spoke of in Reynolds's pictures that the world had never seen before, but with which they were enchanted the moment they beheld it, and which both

Hoppner and Jackson, with all their merit, have but faintly imitated? It was a reflection of the artist's mind, an emanation from his character transferred to the canvas. It was an ease, an amenity, an indolent but anxious satisfaction, a graceful playfulness, belonging to his disposition, and spreading its charm on all around it, attracting what harmonized with, and softening and moulding what repelled it; avoiding everything hard, stiff, and formal, shrinking from details, reposing on effect, imparting motion to still life, viewing all things in their "gayest, happiest attitudes," and infusing his own spirit into nature as the leaven is kneaded into the dough; still, though the original bias existed in himself, and was thence stamped upon his works, yet the character could neither have been formed without the constant recurrence and pursuit of proper nourishment, nor could it have expressed itself without a reference to those objects, books, and attitudes in nature, which soothed and assimilated with it. What made Hogarth original and inimitable, but the wonderful redundance, and, as it were, *supererogation* of his genius, which poured the oil of humanity into the wounds and bruises of human nature, redeemed while it exposed vice and folly, made deformity pleasing, and turned misfortune into a jest. But could he have done so if there were no wit or enjoyment in a night cellar, or if the cripple could not dance and sing? No, the moral was in nature; but let no one dare to insist upon it after him, in the same language and with the same pretensions! There was Rembrandt; did he invent the extremes of light and shade, or was he only the first that embodied them? He was so only because his eye drank in light and shade more deeply than any one before or since; and therefore the sunshine hung in liquid drops from his pencil, and the dungeon's gloom hovered over his canvas. Who can think of Correggio without a swimming of the head?—the undulating line, the melting grace, the objects advancing and retiring as in measured dance or solemn harmony. But all this fulness,

roundness, and delicacy existed before in nature, and only found a fit sanctuary in his mind. The breadth and masses of Michael Angelo were studies from nature, which he selected and cast in the mould of his own manly and comprehensive genius. The landscapes of Claude are in a fixed repose, as if nothing could be moved from its place without a violence to harmony and just proportions ; in those of Rubens everything is fluttering and in motion—light and indifferent, as the winds blow where they list. All this is characteristic, original, a different mode of nature, which the artist had the happiness to find out and carry to the utmost point of perfection. It has been laid down that no one paints anything but his own character, and almost features, and the workman is always to be traced in the work. Mr Fuseli's figures, if they were like nothing else, were like himself, or resembled the contortions of a dream ; Wilkie's have a parochial air ; Haydon's are heroical, Sir Thomas's, genteel. What Englishman could bear to sit to a French artist ? What English artist could hope to succeed in a French coquette ? There is not only an individual but a national bias which is observable in the different schools and productions of art. Mannerism is the bane (though it is the occasional vice) of genius, and is the worst kind of imitation, for it is a man imitating himself. Many artists go on repeating and caricaturing themselves, till they complain that nature puts them out. Gross plagiarism may consist with great originality. Sterne was a notorious plagiarist, but a true genius. His Corporal Trim, his Uncle Toby, and Mr Shandy, are to be found nowhere else. If Raffaele had done nothing but borrow the two figures from Masaccio, it would have been impossible to say a word in his defence ; none has a right to steal who is not rich enough to be robbed by others. So Milton has borrowed more than any other writer ; but he has uniformly stamped a character of his own upon it. In what relates to the immediate imitation of nature, people

find it difficult to conceive of an opening for originality, inasmuch as they think that they themselves are the whole of nature, and that every other view of it is wrong; in what relates to the productions of imagination or the discoveries of science, as they themselves are totally in the dark, they fancy the whole to be a fabrication, and give the inventor credit for a sort of dealing with the devil, or some preternatural kind of talent. Poets lay a popular and prescriptive claim to inspiration; the astronomer of old was thought able to conjure with the stars; and the skilful leech, who performed unexpected cures, was condemned for a sorcerer. This is as great an error the other way. The vulgar think there is nothing in what lies on the surface, though the learned see beyond it only by stripping off encumbrances, and coming to another surface beneath the first. The difference between art and science is only the difference between the clothed and the naked figure; but the veil of truth must be drawn aside before we can distinctly see the face. The physician is qualified to prescribe remedies because he is acquainted with the internal structure of the body, and has studied the symptoms of disorders; the mathematician arrives at his most surprising conclusions by slow and sure steps, and can add discovery to discovery by the very certainty of the hold he has of all the previous links. There is no witchcraft in either case. The invention of the poet is little more than the fertility of a teeming brain—that is, than the number and quantity of associations present to his mind, and the various shapes in which he can turn them without being distracted, or losing a “semblable coherence” of the parts, as the man of observation and reflection strikes out just and unforeseen remarks by taking off the mask of custom and appearance, or by judging for himself of men and things, without taking it for granted that they are what he has hitherto supposed them, or waiting to be told by others what they are. If there were in our own consciousness or experience no foundation for an unusual remark, it

would not strike us as a discovery, it would sound like a *jeu-d'esprit*, a whim, an oddity, or as flat nonsense. The mere mob, "the great vulgar and the small," are not therefore capable of distinguishing between originality and singularity, for they have no idea beyond the common place of fashion or custom. Prejudice has no ears, either for or against itself; it is alike averse to objections and proofs, for both equally disturb its blind, implicit notions of things. Originality is, then, the strong conception of truth and nature that the mind groans withal, and of which it cannot stay to be delivered by authority or example. It is feeling the ground sufficiently firm under one's feet to be able to go alone. Truth is its essence; it is the strongest possible feeling of truth; for it is a secret and instinctive yearning after and approximation towards it, before it is acknowledged by others, and almost before the mind itself knows what it is. Paradox and eccentricity, on the one hand, show a dearth of originality, as bombast and hyperbole show a dearth of imagination; they are the desperate resources of affectation and want of power. Originality is necessary to genius; for when that which, in the first instance, conferred the character, is afterwards done by rule and routine, it ceases to be genius. To conclude: the value of any work of art or science depends chiefly on the quantity of originality contained in it, and which constitutes either the charm of works of fiction, or the improvement to be derived from those of progressive information. But it is not so in matters of opinion, where every individual thinks he can judge for himself, and does not wish to be set right. There is, consequently, nothing that the world like better than originality of invention, and nothing that they hate worse than originality of thought. Advances in science were formerly regarded with like jealousy, and stigmatized as dangerous by the friends of religion and the state. Galileo was imprisoned in the same city of Florence, where they now preserve his finger pointing to the skies.

ON THE IDEAL.

THE ideal is the abstraction of anything from all the circumstances that weaken its effect, or lessen our admiration of it ; or it is filling up the outline of truth and beauty existing in the mind, so as to leave nothing wanting, or to desire further. The principle of the ideal is the satisfaction we have in the contemplation of any quality or object which makes us seek to heighten, to prolong, to extend that satisfaction to the utmost ; and beyond this we cannot go ; for we cannot get beyond the highest conceivable degree of any quality or excellence diffused over the whole of an object. Any notion of perfection beyond this is a word without meaning—a thing in the clouds. Another name for the ideal is the divine, for what we imagine of the gods is pleasure without pain, power without effort. It is the most exalted idea we can form of humanity. Some persons have hence raised it quite above humanity, and made its essence to consist specifically in the representation of gods and goddesses, just as if, on the same principle that there are court painters, there were certain artists who had the privilege of being admitted into the mythological heaven, and brought away casts and facsimiles of the mouth of Venus or the beard of Jupiter. The ideal is the impassive and immortal ; it is that which exists in and for itself, or is begot by the intense idea and innate love of it. Hence it has been argued by some, as if it were brought from another sphere, as Raffaelle was said to have fetched his Galatea from the skies ; but it was the gods, the “ children of Homer,” who peopled the “ cloud-capt Olympus.” The statue of Venus is not beautiful because it represents a goddess, but it was supposed to

represent a goddess because it was in the highest degree (that the art or wit of man could make it) and in every part beautiful. The Venus is only the idea of the most perfect female beauty, and the statue will be none the worse for bearing the more modern name of Musidora. The ideal is only making the best of what is natural and subject to the sense. Goddesses also walk the earth in the shape of women; the height of nature surpasses the utmost stretch of the imagination; the human form is above the image of the divinity.

It has been usual to represent the ideal as an abstraction of general nature, or as a mean or average proportion between different qualities and faculties, which, instead of carrying any one to the highest point of perfection or satisfaction, would only neutralise and damp the impression. We take our notions on this subject chiefly from the antique; but what higher conception do we form of the Jupiter of Phidias than that of power frowning in awful majesty? or of the Minerva of the same hand than that of wisdom "severe in youthful beauty?" We shall do well not to refine on our theories beyond these examples that have been left us—

"Inimitable on earth by model,
Or by shading pencil shown."

What is the Venus, the Apollo, the Hercules, but the personification of beauty, grace, and strength, or the displaying these several properties in every part of the attitude, face, and figure, and in the utmost conceivable degree, but without confounding the particular kinds of form or expression in an intermediate something, pretending to be more perfect than either?

If the face of the Venus had been soft and feminine, but the figure had not corresponded, then this would have been a defect of the ideal, which subdues the discordance of nature in the mould of passion, and so far from destroying character imparts the same character to all, according to a

certain established idea or preconception in the mind. The following up the contrary principle would lead to the inevitable result that the most perfect—that is, the most abstract representation of the human form—could contain neither age nor sex, neither character nor expression, neither the attributes of motion nor of rest, but a mere unmeaning negation or doubtful balance of all positive qualities; in fact, to propose to embody an abstraction is a contradiction in terms. Besides, it might be objected captiously that what is strictly common to all is necessarily to be found exemplified in each individual. The attempt to carry such a scheme into execution would not merely supersede all the varieties and accidents of nature, but would effectually put a stop to the productions of art, or reduce them to one vague and undefined abstraction, answering to the word “man.” That amalgamation, then, of a number of different impressions into one, which in some sense is felt to constitute the ideal, is not to be sought in the dry and desert spaces or the endless void of metaphysical abstraction, or by taking a number of things and muddling them all together, but by singling out some one thing or leading quality of an object, and making it the pervading and regulating principle of all the rest, so as to produce the greatest strength and harmony of effect. This is the natural progress of things, and accords with the ceaseless tendency of the human mind from the Finite to the Infinite. If I see beauty, I do not want to change it for power; if I am struck with power, I am no longer in love with beauty; but I wish to make beauty still more beautiful, power still more powerful, and to pamper and exalt the prevailing impression, whatever it be, till it ends in a dream and a vision of glory. This view of the subject has been often dwelt upon. I shall endeavour to supply some inferences from it. The ideal, then it appears by this account of it, is the enhancing and expanding an idea from the satisfaction we take in it, or it is taking away

whatever divides, and adding whatever increases our sympathy with pleasure and power "till our content is absolute," or at the height. Hence that *repose* which has been remarked as one striking condition of the ideal ; for, as it is nothing but the continued approximation of the mind to the great and the good, so in the attainment of this object it rejects as much as possible not only the petty, the mean, and disagreeable, but also the agony and violence of passion, the force of contrast, and the extravagance of imagination. It is a law to itself. It relies on its own aspirations after pure enjoyment and lofty contemplations alone, self-moved and self-sustained, without the grosser stimulus of the irritation of the will, privation, or suffering, unless when it is inured and reconciled to the last (as an element of its being) by heroic fortitude, and when "strong patience conquers deep despair." In this sense Milton's "Satan" is ideal, though tragic ; for it is permanent tragedy, or one fixed idea without vicissitude or frailty, and where all the pride of intellect and power is brought to bear in confronting and enduring pain. Mr Wordsworth has expressed this feeling of stoical indifference (proof against outward impressions) admirably in the poem of "Laodamia :"—

" Know, virtue were not virtue, if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
These raptures daily ; Erebus disdains—
Calm pleasures there abide, majestic pains."

These lines are a noble description and example of the ideal in poetry. But the ideal is not in general the stronghold of poetry ; for description inwards (to produce any vivid impression) requires a translation of the object into some other form, which is the language of metaphor and imagination, as narrative can only interest by a succession of events, and a conflict of hopes and fears. Therefore, the sphere of the ideal is in a manner limited to sculpture and

painting, where the object itself is given entire without any possible change of circumstances, and where, though the impression is momentary, it lasts for ever. Hence we may see the failure in Sir Charles Grandison, which is an attempt to embody this perfect ideal character in a succession of actions without passion, and in a variety of situations where he is still the same everlasting coxcomb, and where we are tired to death of the monotony, affectation, and self-conceit. The story of "Patient Griselda," however fine the sentiment, is far from dramatic ; for the ideal character, which is the self-sufficient, the immovable, and the one, precludes change, or at least all motive for, or interest in, the alternation of events, to which it constantly rises superior. Shakespeare's characters are interesting and dramatic, in proportion as they are not above passion and outward circumstances, that is, as they are men, and not angels. The Greek tragedies may serve to explain how far the ideal and the dramatic are consistent ; for the characters there are almost as ideal as their statues, and almost as impassive ; and perhaps their extreme decorum and self-possession are only rendered palatable to us by the story, which nearly always represents a conflict between gods and men. The ideal part is, however, necessary at all times to the grandeur of tragedy, since it is the superiority of character to fortune and circumstances, or the larger scope of thought and feeling thrown into it, that redeems it from the charge of vulgar grossness or physical horrors. Mrs Siddons' acting had this character ; that is to say, she kept her state in the midst of the tempests of passion, and her eye surveyed not merely the present suffering but the causes and consequences ; there was inherent power and dignity of manner. In a word, as there is a sanguine temperament, and a health of body and mind which floats us over daily annoyances and hindrances (instead of fastening upon petty and disagreeable details), and turns everything to advantage, so it is in art and works of the imagi-

nation, the principle of the ideal being neither more nor less than that fulness of satisfaction and enlargement of comprehension in the mind itself that assists and expands all that accords with it, and throws aside and triumphs over whatever is adverse. Grace in movement is either that which is continuous and consistent, from having no obstacles opposed to it, or that which perseveres in this continuous and equable movement from a delight in it, in spite of interruption or uneven ground ; this last is the ideal, or a persisting in, and giving effect to, our choice of the good, notwithstanding the unfavourableness of the actual or outward circumstances. We may, in like manner, trace the origin of dancing, music, and poetry. Self-possession is the ideal in ordinary behaviour. A low or vulgar character seizes on every trifling or painful circumstance that occurs, from irritability or want of imagination to look beyond the moment, while a person of more refinement and capacity, or with a stronger predisposition of the mind to good, and a greater fund of good sense and pleasurable feeling to second it, despises these idle provocations, and preserves an unruffled composure and serenity of temper. This internal character, being permanent, communicates itself to the outward expression in proportionable sweetness, delicacy, and unity of effect, which it requires all the same characteristics of the mind to feel and convey to others ; and hence the superiority of Raffaele's Madonnas over Hogarth's faces. Keeping is not the ideal, for there may be keeping in the little, the mean, and the disjointed, without strength, softness, or expansion. The fawns and satyrs of antiquity belong (like other fabulous creations) rather to the grotesque than the ideal. They may be considered, however, as a bastard species of the ideal, for they stamp one prominent character of vice and deformity on the whole face, instead of going into the minute, uncertain, and shuffling details. As to the rest, the ideal abhors monsters and incongruity. If the

horses in the Elgin Marbles, or the boar of Meleager are ranked with the human figures, it is from their being perfect representations of the forms and actions of the animals designed, not caricatures half way between the human and the brute.

The ideal, then, is the highest point of purity and perfection to which we can carry the idea of any object or quality. The natural differs from the ideal style, inasmuch as what anything is differs from what we wish and can conceive it to be. Many people would substitute the phrase, from what it ought to be, to express the latter part of the alternative, and would explain what a thing ought to be by that which is best. But for myself, I do not understand, or at least it does not appear to me a self-evident proposition, either what a thing ought to be or what it is best that it should be; it is only shifting the difficulty a remove farther, and begging the question a second time. I may know what is good; I can tell what is better; but that which is best is beyond me—it is a thing in the clouds. There is perhaps also a species of cant—the making up for a want of clearness of ideas by insinuating a pleasing moral inference—in the words purity and perfection used above; but I would be understood as meaning by purity nothing more than a freedom from alloy or any incongruous mixture in a given quality or character of an object, and by perfection completeness, or the extending that quality to all the parts and circumstances of an object, so that it shall be as nearly as possible of a piece. The imagination does not ordinarily bestow any pains on that which is mean and indifferent in itself, but having conceived an interest in any thing, and the passions being once excited, we endeavour to give them food and scope by making that which is beautiful still more beautiful, that which is striking still more grand, that which is hateful still more deformed, through the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees, till the mind can go no farther in this

progression of fancy and passion without losing the original idea, or quitting its hold of nature, which is the ground on which it still rests with fluttering pinions. The ideal does not transform any object into something else, or neutralise its character, but, by removing what is irrelevant and supplying what was defective, makes it more itself than it was before. I have included above the Fawns and Satyrs as well as the Heroes and Deities of antique art, or the perfection of deformity as well as of beauty and strength, but any one who pleases may draw the line, and leave out the exceptionable part ; it will make no difference in the principle.

Venus is painted fair, with golden locks, but she must not be fair beyond the fairness of woman ; for the beauty we desire is that of woman—nor must the hair be actually of the colour of gold, but only approaching to it, for then it would no longer look like hair, but like something else, and in striving to enhance the effect we should weaken it. Habit as well as passion, knowledge as well as desire, is one part of the human mind ; nor, in aiming at imaginary perfection, are we to confound the understood boundaries and distinct classes of things, or “to o’erstep the modesty of nature.” We may raise the superstructure of fancy as high as we please ; the basis is custom. We talk in words of an ivory skin, of golden tresses ; but these are only figures of speech, and a poetical licence. Richardson acknowledges that *Clarissa’s* neck was not so white as the lace on it, whatever the poets might say if they had been called upon to describe it.

ON JUDGING OF PICTURES.

PAINTERS assume that none can judge of pictures but themselves. Many do this avowedly, some by implication, and all in practice. They exclaim against any one writing about art who has not served his apprenticeship to the craft, who is not versed in the detail of its mechanism. This has often put me a little out of patience—but I will take patience, and say why.

In the first place, with regard to the productions of living artists, painters have no right to speak at all. The way in which they are devoured and consumed by envy would be ludicrous if it were not lamentable. It is folly to talk of the divisions and backbitings of authors and poets while there are such people as painters in the world. I never in the whole course of my life heard one speak in hearty praise of another. Generally they blame downrightly ; but at all events their utmost applause is with a damning reservation. Authors—even poets, the *genus irritabile*—do taste and acknowledge the beauties of the productions of their competitors ; but painters either cannot see them through the green spectacles of envy, or seeing, they hate and deny them the more. In conformity with this, painters are more greedy of praise than any other order of men. “They gorge the little fame they get all raw”—they are gluttonous of it in their own persons in the proportion in which they would starve others.

I once knew a very remarkable instance of this. A friend of mine had written a criticism of an exhibition. In this were mentioned, in terms of the highest praise, the works of two brothers—sufficiently so, indeed, to have satisfied, one would have thought, the most insatiate. I

was going down into the country to the place where these brothers lived, and I was asked to be the bearer of the work in which the critique appeared ; I was so, and sent a copy to each of them. Some days afterwards I called on one of them, who began to speak of the review of his pictures. He expressed some thanks for what was said of them, but complained that the writer of it had fallen into a very common error under which he had often suffered—the confounding, namely, his pictures with his brother's. “ Now, my dear sir,” continued he, “ what is said of me is all very well, but here,” turning to the high-wrought panegyric on his brother, “ this is all in allusion to my style—this is all with reference to my pictures—this is all meant for me.” I could hardly help exclaiming before the man's face. The praise which was given to himself was such as would have called a blush to any but a painter's face to speak of ; but, not content with this, he insisted on appropriating his brother's also ; how insatiate is the pictorial man !

But to come to the more general subject. I deny *in toto* and at once the exclusive right and power of painters to judge of pictures. What is a picture made for ? To convey certain ideas to the mind of a painter, that is, of one man in ten thousand ? No, but to make them apparent to the eye and mind of all. If a picture be admired by none but painters I think it is a strong presumption that the picture is bad. A painter is no more a judge, I suppose, than another man of how people feel and look under certain passions and events. Everybody sees as well as he whether certain figures on the canvas are like such a man, or like a cow, a tree, a bridge, or a windmill. All that the painter can do more than the *lay* spectator is to tell *why* and how the merits and defects of a picture are produced. I see that such a figure is ungraceful, and out of nature—he shows me that the drawing is faulty, or the foreshortening incorrect. He then points out to me whence the blemish arises ; but he is not a bit more aware of the existence of

the blemish than I am. In Hogarth's "Frontispiece" I see that the whole business is absurd, for a man on a hill two miles off could not light his pipe at a candle held out of a window close to me; he tells me that is from a want of perspective—that is, of certain rules by which certain effects are obtained. He shows me why the picture is bad, but I am just as well capable of saying "the picture is bad" as he is. To take a coarse illustration, but one most exactly opposite: I can tell whether a made dish be good or bad—whether its taste be pleasant or disagreeable; it is dressed for the palate of uninitiated people, and not alone for the disciples of Dr Kitchener and Mr Ude. But it needs a cook to tell one *why* it is bad; that there is a grain too much of this, or a drop too much of t'other; that it has been boiled rather too much, or stewed rather too little. These things, the wherefores, as Squire Western would say, I require an artist to tell me; but the point in debate—the worth or the bad quality of the painting or pottage—I am as well able to decide upon as any who ever brandished a pallet or a pan, a brush or a skimming-ladle.

To go into the higher branches of the art—the poetry of painting—I deny still more peremptorily the exclusiveness of the initiated. It might as well be said that none but those who could write a play have any right to sit on the third row in the pit, on the first night of a new tragedy; nay, there is more plausibility in the one than the other. No man can judge of poetry without possessing in some measure a poetical mind; it need not be of that degree necessary to create, but it must be equal to taste and to analyse. Now in painting there is a directly mechanical power required to render those imaginations, to the judging of which the mind may be perfectly competent. I may know what is a just or a beautiful representation of love, anger, madness, despair, without being able to draw a straight line; and I do not see how that faculty adds to the capability of so judging. A very great proportion of painting

is mechanical. The higher kinds of painting need first a poet's mind to conceive ; very well, but then they need a draughtsman's hand to execute. Now he who possesses the mind alone is fully able to judge of what is produced, even though he is by no means endowed with the mechanical power of producing it himself. I am far from saying that any one is capable of duly judging pictures of the higher class. It requires a mind capable of estimating the noble, or touching, or terrible, or sublime subjects which they present ; but there is no sort of necessity that we should be able to put them upon the canvas ourselves.

There is one point even, on which painters usually judge worse of pictures than the general spectator ; I say usually, for there are some painters who are too thoroughly intellectual to run into the error of which I am about to speak. I mean that they are apt to overlook the higher and more mental parts of a picture in their haste to criticise its mechanical properties. They forget the expression in being too mindful of what is more strictly manual. They talk of such a colour being skilfully or unskilfully put in opposition to another, rather than of the moral contrast of the countenances of a group. They say that the flesh-tints are well brought out, before they speak of the face which the flesh forms. To use a French term of much condensation, they think of the *physique* before they bestow any attention on the *morale*.

I am the farthest in the world from falling into the absurdity of upholding that painters should neglect the mechanical parts of their profession ; for without a mastery in them it would be impossible to body forth any imaginations, however strong or beautiful. I only wish that they should not overlook the end to which these are the means—and give them an undue preference over that end itself. Still more I object to their arrogating to the possessors of these qualities of hand and eye all power of

judging that which is conveyed through the physical vision into the inward soul.

On looking over what I have written, I find that I have used some expressions with regard to painters as a body which may make it appear that I hold them in light esteem, whereas no one can admire their art, or appreciate their pursuit of it, more highly than I do. Of what I have said, however, with regard to their paltry denial of each other's merits, I cannot bate them an ace. I appeal to all those who are in the habit of associating with painters to say whether my assertion is not correct. And why should they do this?—surely the field is wide enough. Haydon and Wilkie can travel to fame together without ever jostling each other by the way. Surely there are parallel roads which may be followed, each leading to the same point, but neither crossing or trenching upon one another.

The art of Painting is one equally delightful to the eye and to the mind. It has very nearly the reality of dramatic exhibition, and has permanence, which that is wholly without. We may gaze at a picture, and pause to think, and turn and gaze again. The art is inferior to poetry in magnitude of extent and succession of detail, but its power over any one point is far superior; it seizes it, and figures it forth in corporeal existence, if not in bodily life. It gives to the eye the physical semblance of those figures which have floated in vagueness in the mind. It condenses indistinct and gauzy visions into palpable forms—as, in the story, the morning mist gathered into the embodying a spirit. But shall it be said that the enchanter alone can judge of the enchantment—that none shall have an eye to see, and a heart to feel, unless he have also a hand to execute? Alas, our inherent perceptions give the lie to this. As I used to go to the Louvre, day after day, to glut myself and revel in the congregated genius of pictorial ages, would any one convince me that it was necessary to be able to paint, that I might duly appreciate a picture?

ON WILLIAMS'S VIEWS IN GREECE.*

THERE has been lately exhibited at the Calton Convening Room, Edinburgh, a collection of views in Greece, Italy, Sicily, and the Ionian Isles, painted in water colours by Mr Hugh Williams, a native of Scotland, which themselves do honour to the talents of the artist, as the attention they have excited does to the taste of the Northern capital. It is well, for the exhibition in that town of the works of living artists (to answer to our Somerset House exhibition) required some set-off. Mr Williams has made the *amende honorable* for his country to the offended genius of art, and has stretched out, under the far-famed Calton Hill, and in the eye of Arthur's Seat, fairy visions of the fair land of Greece, that Edinburgh belles and beaux repair to see with cautious wonder and well-regulated delight. It is really a most agreeable novelty to the passing visitant to see the beauty of the North, the radiant beauty of the North, enveloped in such an atmosphere, and set off by such a background. Oriental skies pour their molten lustre on Caledonian charms. The slender, lovely taper waist (made more taper, more lovely, more slender by the stay-maker), instead of being cut in two by the keen blasts that rage in Princes Street, is here supported by warm languid airs, and a thousand sighs, that breathe from the vale of Tempe. Do not those fair tresses look brighter as they are seen hanging over a hill in Arcadia than when they come in contact with the hard grey rock of the Castle? Do not those fair blue eyes look more translucent as they glance over some classic stream? What can vie with that alabaster

* From the *Edinburgh Magazine* for May 1822.

skin but marble temples, dedicated to the Queen of Love ? What can match those golden freckles but glittering sunsets behind Mount Olympus ? Here, in one corner of the room, stands the Hill of the Muses, and there is a group of Graces under it ! There played the Nine on immortal lyres, and here sit the critical but admiring Scottish fair, with the Catalogue in their hands, reading the quotations from Lord Byron's verses with liquid eyes and lovely vermilion lips—would that they spoke English, or anything but Scotch ! Poor is this irony ! Vain the attempt to reconcile Scottish figures with Attic scenery ! What land can rival Greece ? What earthly flowers can compare with the colours in the sky ? What living beauty can recall the dead ? For in that word, GREECE, there breathe three thousand years of fame that has no date to come ! Over that land hovers a light, brighter than that of suns, softer than that which vernal skies shed on halcyon seas, the light that rises from the tomb of virtue, genius, liberty ! Oh ! thou Uranian Venus, thou that never art, but wast and art to be ; thou that the eye sees not, but that livest for ever in the heart ; thou whom men believe and know to be, for thou dwellest in the desires and longings and hunger of the mind ; thou art a goddess, and we thy worshippers say, Dost thou not smile for ever on this land of Greece, and shed thy purple light over it, and blend thy choicest blandishments with its magic name ? But here (in the Calton Convening Room, in Waterloo Place, close under the Melville monument—strange contradiction !) another Greece grows on the walls—other skies are to be seen, ancient temples rise, and modern Grecian ladies walk. Here towers Mount Olympus, where gods once sat—that is the top of a hill in Arcadia—(who would think that the eyes would ever behold a form so visionary, that they would ever see an image of that, which seems only a delicious vanished sound ?) this is Corinth—that is the Parthenon—there stands Thebes in Bœotia—that is the Plain of Platæa,—yonder is the City of Syracuse, and

the Temple of Minerva Sunias, and there the site of the gardens of Alcinous.

“Close to the gate a spacious garden lies,
From storms defended, and inclement skies :
Tall thriving trees confess the fruitful mould,
The reddening apple ripens here to gold.
Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,
With deeper red the full pomegranate grows ;
The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,
And verdant olives flourish round the year.
The balmy spirit of the western gale
Eternal breathes on fruits, untaught to fail ;
The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,
The buds to harden, and the fruit to grow.”

This is Pope's description of them in the “*Odyssey*,” which (we must say) is very bad, and if Mr Williams had not given us a more distinct idea of the places he professes to describe we should not have gone out of our way to notice them. As works of art, these water-colour drawings deserve very high praise. The drawing is correct and characteristic ; the colouring chaste, rich, and peculiar ; the finishing generally careful, and the selection of points of view striking and picturesque. We have at once an impressive and satisfactory idea of the country of which we have heard so much ; and wish to visit places which, it seems from this representation of them, would not belie all that we have heard. Some splenetic travellers have pretended that Attica was dry, flat, and barren. But it is not so in Mr Williams's authentic draughts ; and we thank him for restoring to us our old and, as it appears, true illusion—for crowning that Elysium of our school-boy fancies with majestic hills, and scooping it into lovely winding valleys once more. Lord Byron is, we believe, among those who have spoken ill of Greece, calling it a “sand bank,” or something of that sort. Every ill natured traveller ought to hold a pencil as well as a pen in his hand, and be forced to produce a sketch of his own life. As to the subjects of

Mr Williams's pencil, nothing can exceed the local interest that belongs to them, and which he has done nothing, either through injudicious selection or negligent execution, to diminish. Query. Is not this interest as great in London as it is in Edinburgh? In other words, we mean to ask whether this exhibition would not answer well in London.

There are a number of other very interesting sketches interspersed, and some very pleasing *home* views which seem to show that nature is everywhere herself.

ON A PORTRAIT OF AN ENGLISH LADY,
BY VANDYCK.

THE portrait I speak of is in the Louvre, where it is numbered 416, and the only account of it in the Catalogue is "A Lady and her Daughter." It is a companion to another whole-length by the same artist, No. 417, of "A Gentleman and a little Girl." Both are evidently English.

The face of the lady has nothing very remarkable in it, but that it may be said to be the very perfection of the English female face. It is not particularly beautiful, but there is a sweetness in it, and a goodness conjoined, which is inexpressibly delightful. The smooth ivory forehead is a little ruffled, as if some slight cause of uneasiness, like a cloud, had just passed over it. The eyes are raised with a look of timid attention; the mouth is compressed with modest sensibility; the complexion is delicate and clear; and over the whole figure (which is seated) there reigns the utmost propriety and decorum. The habitual gentleness of the character seems to have been dashed with some anxious thought or momentary disquiet, and, like the shrinking flower, in whose leaves the lucid drop yet trembles, looks out and smiles at the storm that is overblown. A mother's tenderness, a mother's fear, appears to flutter on the surface, on the extreme verge of the expression, and not to have quite subsided into thoughtless indifference or mild composure. There is a reflection of the same expression in the little child at her knee, who turns her head round with a certain appearance of constraint and innocent wonder; and perhaps it is the difficulty of getting her to sit (or to sit still) that has caused the transient contraction of her mother's brow—that lovely unstained mirror of pure

affection, too fair, too delicate, too soft and feminine for the breath of serious misfortune ever to come near, and not to crush it. It is a face, in short, of the greatest purity and sensibility, sweetness and simplicity, or such as Chaucer might have described :

“ Where all is conscience and tender heart.”

I have said that it is an English face ; and I may add (without being invidious) that it is not a French one. I will not say that they have no face to equal this ; of that I am not a judge ; but I am sure they have no face equal to this, in the qualities by which it is distinguished. They may have faces as amiable, but then the possessors of them will be conscious of it. There may be equal elegance, but not the same ease ; there may be even greater intelligence, but without the innocence ; more vivacity, but then it will run into petulance or coquetry ; in short, there may be every other good quality, but a total absence of all pretension to or wish to make a display of it, but the same unaffected modesty and simplicity. In French faces (and I have seen some that were charming both for the features and expression) there is a varnish of insincerity, a something theatrical or meretricious ; but here every particle is pure to the “ last recesses of the mind.” The face (such as it is, and it has a considerable share both of beauty and meaning) is without the smallest alloy of affectation. There is no false glitter in the eyes to make them look brighter ; no little wrinkles about the corners of the eye-lids, the effect of self-conceit ; no pursing up of the mouth, no significant leer, no primness, no extravagance, no assumed levity or gravity. You have the genuine text of nature without gloss or comment. There is no heightening of conscious charms to produce greater effect, no studying of airs and graces in the glass of vanity. You have not the remotest hint of the milliner, the dancing-master, the dealer in paints and patches. You have before you a real English lady of the seventeenth century, who looks

like one because she cannot look otherwise ; whose expression of sweetness, intelligence, or concern, is just what is natural to her, and what the occasion requires ; whose entire demeanour is the emanation of her habitual sentiments and disposition, and who is as free from guile or affectation as the little child by her side. I repeat that this is not the distinguishing character of the French physiognomy, which, at its best, is often spoiled by a consciousness of what it is, and a restless desire to be something more.

Goodness of disposition, with a clear complexion and handsome features, is the chief ingredient in English beauty. There is a great difference in this respect between Vandyck's portraits of women and Titian's, of which we may find examples in the Louvre. The picture which goes by the name of his "Mistress" is one of the most celebrated of the latter. The neck of this picture is like a broad crystal mirror ; and the hair which she holds so carelessly in her hand is like meshes of beaten gold. The eyes, which roll in their ample sockets like two shining orbs, and which are turned away from the spectator, only dart their glances the more powerfully into the soul ; and the whole picture is a paragon of frank, cordial grace, and transparent brilliancy of colouring. Her tight bodice compresses her full but finely-proportioned waist ; while the tucker in part conceals and almost clasps the snowy bosom. But you never think of anything beyond the personal attractions and a certain sparkling intelligence. She is not marble, but a fine piece of animated clay. There is none of that retired and shrinking character, that modesty of demeanour, that sensitive delicacy, that starts even at the shadow of evil, that are so evidently to be traced in the portrait by Vandyck. Still there is no positive vice, no meanness, no hypocrisy, but an unconstrained, elastic spirit of self-enjoyment, more bent on the end than scrupulous about the means ; with firmly-braced nerves and a tincture of vulgarity. She is not like an English lady, nor like a lady

at all ; but she is a very fine servant-girl, conscious of her advantages, and willing to make the most of them. In fact, Titian's "Mistress" answers exactly, I conceive, to the idea conveyed by the English word sweetheart. The Marchioness of Guasto is a fairer comparison. She is by the supposition a lady, but still an Italian one. There is a honeyed richness about the texture of the skin, and her air is languid from a sense of pleasure. Her dress, though modest, has the marks of studied coquetry about it ; it touches the very limits which it dares not pass : and her eyes, which are bashful and downcast, do not seem to droop under the fear of observation, but to retire from the gaze of kindled admiration,

"As if they thrill'd
Frail hearts, yet quenched not!"

One might say, with Othello, of the hand with which she holds the globe that is offered to her acceptance :

"This hand of yours requires
A sequester from liberty, fasting, and pray'r,
Much castigation, exercise devout;
For here's a young and melting devil here
That commonly rebels."

The hands of Vandyck's portrait have the purity and coldness of marble. The colour of the face is such as might be breathed upon it by the refreshing breeze ; that of the Marchioness of Guasto's is like the glow it might imbibe from the golden sunset. The expression in the English lady springs from her duties and her affections ; that of the Italian countess inclines more to her ease and pleasures. The Marchioness of Guasto was one of the three sisters to whom, it is said, the inhabitants of Pisa proposed to pay divine honours, in the manner that beauty was worshipped by the fabulous enthusiasts of old. Her husband seems to have participated in the common infatuation, from the fanciful homage that is paid to her in this allegorical composition ; and if she was at all intoxi-

cated by the incense offered to her vanity, the painter must be allowed to have "qualified" the expression of it "very craftily."

I pass on to another female face and figure, that of the Virgin in the beautiful picture of the "Presentation in the Temple," by Guido. The expression here is ideal and has a reference to visionary objects and feelings. It is marked by an abstraction from outward impressions, a downcast look, an elevated brow, an absorption of purpose, a stillness and resignation that become the person and the scene in which she is engaged. The colour is pale or gone; so that purified from every grossness, dead to worldly passions, she almost seems like a statue kneeling. With knees bent and hands uplifted, her motionless figure appears supported by a soul within, all whose thoughts, from the low ground of humility, tend heavenward. We find none of the triumphant buoyancy of health and spirit as in Titian's "Mistress," nor the luxurious softness of the portrait of the Marchioness of Guasto, nor the flexible, tremulous sensibility, nor the anxious attention to passing circumstances, nor the familiar look, of the lady by Vandyck; on the contrary, there is a complete unity and concentration of expression; the whole is wrought up and moulded into one intense feeling, but that feeling fixed on objects remote, refined, and ethereal as the form of the fair suppliant. A still greater contrast to this internal, or, as it were, introverted expression, is to be found in the group of female heads by the same artist (Guido,) in his picture of the "Flight of Paris and Helen." They are the three last heads on the left hand side of the picture. They are thrown into every variety of attitude, as if to take the heart by surprise at every avenue. A tender warmth is suffused over the faces; their head-dresses are airy and fanciful, their complexion sparkling and glossy; their features seem to catch pleasure from every surrounding object, and to reflect it back again. Vanity,

beauty, gaiety glance from their conscious looks and wreathed smiles, like the changing colours from the ring-dove's neck. To sharpen the effect and point the moral, they are accompanied by a little negro-boy, who holds up the train of elegance, fashion, and voluptuous grace!

Guido was the "genteel" of painters; he was a poetical Vandyck. The latter could give, with inimitable and perfect skill, the airs and graces of people of fashion under their daily and habitual aspects, or as he might see them in a looking-glass. The former saw them in his "mind's eye," and could transform them into supposed characters and imaginary situations. Still the elements were the same. Vandyck gave them with the mannerism of habit and the individual details; Guido, as they were rounded into grace and smoothness by the breath of fancy, and borne along by the tide of sentiment. Guido did not want the ideal faculty, though he wanted strength and variety. There is an effeminacy about his pictures, for he gave only the different modifications of beauty. It was the goddess that inspired him, the Siren that seduced him, and, whether as saint or sinner, was equally welcome to him. His creations are as frail as they are fair. They all turn on a passion for beauty, and without this support are nothing. He could paint beauty combined with pleasure, or sweetness, or grief, or devotion; but unless it were the groundwork and the primary condition of his performance, he became insipid, ridiculous, and extravagant. There is one thing to be said in his favour; he knew his own powers or followed his own inclinations; and the delicacy of his tact in general prevented him from attempting subjects uncongenial with it. He "trode the primrose path of dalliance" with equal prudence and modesty. That he is a little monotonous and tame is all that can be said against him; and he seldom went out of his way to expose his deficiencies in a glaring point of view. He came round to subjects of beauty at last, or

gave them that turn. A story is told of his having painted a very lovely head of a girl, and being asked from whom he had taken it, he replied, "From his old man!" This is not unlikely. He is the only great painter (except Correggio) who appears constantly to have subjected what he saw to an imaginary standard. His Magdalens are more beautiful than sorrowful; in his Madonnas there is more of sweetness and modesty than of elevation. He makes but little difference between his heroes and his heroines; his angels are women, and his women angels! If it be said that he repeated himself too often, and has painted too many Magdalens and Madonnas, I can only say in answer, "Would he had painted twice as many!" If Guido wanted compass and variety in his art, it signifies little, since what he wanted is abundantly supplied by others. He had softness, delicacy, and ideal grace in a supreme degree, and his fame rests on these as the cloud on the rock. It is to the highest point of excellence in any art or department that we look back with gratitude and admiration, as it is the highest mountain-peak that we catch in the distance, and lose sight of only when it turns to air.

I know of no other difference between Raffaele and Guido than that the one was twice the man the other was. Raffaele was a bolder genius, and invented according to nature; Guido only made draughts after his own disposition and character. There is a common cant of criticism which makes Titian merely a colourist. What he really wanted was invention; he had expression in the highest degree. I declare I have seen heads of his with more meaning in them than any of Raffaele's. But he fell short of Raffaele in this, that (except in one or two instances) he could not heighten and adapt the expression that he saw to different and more striking circumstances. He gave more of what he saw than any other painter that ever lived, and in the imitative part of his art had a more

universal genius than Raffaele had in composition and invention. Beyond the actual and habitual look of nature, however, "the demon that he served" deserted him, or became a very tame one. Vandyck gave more of the general air and manners of fashionable life than of individual character; and the subjects that he treated are neither remarkable for intellect nor passion. They are people of polished manners and placid constitutions; and many of the very best of them are "stupidly good." Titian's portraits, on the other hand, frequently present a much more formidable than inviting appearance. You would hardly trust yourself in a room with them. You do not bestow a cold, leisurely approbation on them, but look to see what they may be thinking of you, not without some apprehension for the result. They have not the clear, smooth skins or the even pulse that Vandyck's seem to possess. They are, for the most part, fierce, wary, voluptuous, subtle, haughty. Raffaele painted Italian faces as well as Titian. But he threw into them a character of intellect rather than of temperament. In Titian the irritability takes the lead, sharpens and gives direction to the understanding. There seems to be a personal controversy between the spectator and the individual whose portrait he contemplates, which shall be master of the other. I may refer to two portraits in the Louvre, the one by Raffaele, the other by Titian (Nos. 1153 and 1210), in illustration of these remarks. I do not know two finer or more characteristic specimens of these masters, each in its way. The one is of a student dressed in black, absorbed in thought, intent on some problem, with the hands crossed and leaning on a table for support, as it were to give freer scope to the labour of the brain, and though the eyes are directed towards you, it is with evident absence of mind. Not so the other portrait, No. 1210. All its faculties are collected to see what it can make of you; as if you had intruded upon it with some

hostile design, it takes a defensive attitude, and shows as much vigilance as dignity. It draws itself up, as if to say, "Well, what do you think of me?" and exercises a discretionary power over you. It has "an eye to threaten and command," not to be lost in idle thought, or in ruminating over some abstruse, speculative proposition. It is this intense personal character which, I think, gives the superiority to Titian's portraits over all others, and stamps them with a living and permanent interest. Of other pictures you tire, if you have them constantly before you; with these there seems to be some question pending between you, as though an intimate friend or inveterate foe were in the room with you; they exert a kind of fascinating power; and there is that exact resemblance of individual nature which is always new and always interesting, because you cannot carry away a mental abstraction of it, and you must recur to the object to revive it in its full force and integrity. I would as soon have Raffaele's or most other pictures hanging up in a collection, that I might pay an occasional visit to them: Titian's are the only ones that I should wish to have hanging in the same room with me for company!

Titian in his portraits appears to have understood the principle of historical design better than anybody. Every part tells, and has a bearing on the whole. There is no one who has such simplicity and repose—no violence, no affectation, no attempt at forcing an effect: insomuch that by the uninitiated he is often condemned as unmeaning and insipid. A turn of the eye, a compression of the lip, decides the point. He just draws the face out of its most ordinary state, and gives it the direction he would have it take; but then every part takes the same direction, and the effect of this united impression (which is absolutely momentary and all but habitual) is wonderful. It is that which makes his portraits the most natural and the most

striking in the world. It may be compared to the effect of a number of small loadstones, that by acting together lift the greatest weights. Titian seized upon the lines of character in the most original and connected point of view. Thus in his celebrated portrait of Hippolito de Medici, there is a keen, sharpened expression that strikes you, like a blow from the spear that he holds in his hand. The look goes through you; yet it has no frown, no startling gesticulation, no affected penetration. It is quiet, simple, but it almost withers you. The whole face and each separate feature is cast in the same acute or wedge-like form. The forehead is high and narrow, the eyebrows raised and coming to a point in the middle, the nose straight and peaked, the mouth contracted and drawn up at the corners, the chin acute, and the two sides of the face slanting to a point. The number of acute angles which the lines of the face form are, in fact, a net entangling the attention and subduing the will. The effect is felt at once, though it asks time and consideration to understand the cause. It is a face which you would beware of rousing into anger or hostility, as you would beware of setting in motion some complicated and dangerous machinery. The possessor of it, you may be sure, is no trifler. Such, indeed, was the character of the man. This is to paint true portrait and true history. So if our artist painted a mild and thoughtful expression, all the lines of the countenance were softened and relaxed. If the mouth was going to speak, the whole face was going to speak. It was the same in colour. The gradations are infinite, and yet so blended as to be imperceptible. No two tints are the same, though they produce the greatest harmony and simplicity of tone, like flesh itself. "If," said a person, pointing to the shaded side of a portrait by Titian, "you could turn this round to the light, you would find it would be of the same colour as the other side!"

In short, there is manifest in his portraits a greater tenaciousness and identity of impression than in those of any other painter. Form, colour, feeling, character, seemed to adhere to his eye and to become part of himself ; and his pictures, on this account, "leave stings" in the minds of the spectators ! There is, I grant, the same personal appeal, the same point-blank look in some of Raffaele's portraits (see those of a Princess of Arragon and of Count Castiglione, Nos. 1150 and 1151) as in Titian's ; but they want the texture of the skin and the minute individual details to stamp them with the same reality. And again, as to the uniformity of outline in the features, this principle has been acted upon and carried to excess by Kneller and other artists. The eyes, the eye-brows, the nose, the mouth, the chin, are rounded off as if they were turned in a lathe, or as a peruke maker arranges the curls of a wig. In them it is vile and mechanical, without any reference to truth of character or nature ; and instead of being pregnant with meaning and originality of expression, produces only insipidity and monotony.

Perhaps what is offered above as a key to the peculiar expression of Titian's heads may also serve to explain the difference between painting and copying a portrait. As the perfection of his faces consists in the entire unity and coincidence of all the parts, so the difficulty of ordinary portrait-painting is to bring them to bear at all, or to piece one feature, or one day's labour, on to another. In copying this difficulty does not occur at all. The human face is not one thing, as the vulgar suppose, nor does it remain always the same. It has infinite varieties, which the artist is obliged to notice and to reconcile, or he will make strange work. Not only the light and shade upon it do not continue for two minutes the same ; the position of the head constantly varies (or if you are strict with a sitter, he grows sullen and stupid), each feature is in motion every moment, even while the artist is working at

it, and in the course of a day the whole expression of the countenance undergoes a change, so that the expression which you gave to the forehead or eyes yesterday is totally incompatible with that which you have to give to the mouth to-day. You can only bring it back again to the same point or give it a consistent construction by an effort of imagination, or a strong feeling of character; and you must connect the features together less by the eye than by the mind. The mere setting down what you see in this medley of successive, teasing, contradictory impressions would never do; either you must continually efface what you have done the instant before, or, if you retain it, you will produce a piece of patchwork worse than any caricature. There must be a comprehension of the whole, and in truth a moral sense (as well as a literal one) to unravel the confusion, and guide you through the labyrinth of shifting muscles and features. You must feel what this means, and dive into the hidden soul, in order to know whether that is as it ought to be; for you cannot be sure that it remains as it was. Portrait-painting is, then, painting from recollection and from a conception of character, with the object before us to assist the memory and understanding. In copying, on the contrary, one part does not run away and leave you in the lurch while you are intent upon another. You have only to attend to what is before you, and finish it carefully a bit at a time, and you are sure that the whole will come right. One might parcel it out into squares, as in engraving, and copy one at a time, without seeing or thinking of the rest. I do not say that a conception of the whole and a feeling of the art will not abridge the labour of copying, or produce a truer likeness; but it is the changeableness or identity of the object that chiefly constitutes the difficulty or facility of imitating it, and in the latter case reduces it nearly to a mechanical operation. It is the same in the imitation of still-life, where real objects have not a

principle of motion in them. It is as easy to produce a fac-simile of a table or a chair as to copy a picture, because these things do not stir from their places any more than the features of a portrait stir from theirs. You may therefore bestow any given degree of minute and continued attention on finishing any given part without being afraid that when finished it will not correspond with the rest. Nay, it requires more talent to copy a fine portrait than to paint an original picture of a table or a chair, for the picture has a soul in it, and the table has not. It has been made an objection (and I think a just one) against the extreme high finishing of the drapery and backgrounds in portraits (to which some schools, particularly the French, are addicted), that it gives an unfinished look to the face, the most important part of the picture. A lady or a gentleman cannot sit quiet so long or so still as a lay-figure, and if you finish up each part according to the length of time it will remain in one position, the face will seem to have been painted for the sake of the drapery, not the drapery to set off the face. There is an obvious limit to everything if we attend to common sense and feeling. If a carpet or a curtain will admit of being finished more than the living face, we finish them less because they excite less interest, and we are less willing to throw away our time and pains upon them. This is the unavoidable result in a natural and well regulated style of art; but what is to be said of a school where no interest is felt in anything, where nothing is known of any object but that it is there, and where superficial and petty details which the eye can explore, and the hand execute, with persevering and systematic indifference, constitute the soul of art.

The expression is the great difficulty in history or portrait-painting, and yet it is the great clue to both. It renders forms doubly impressive from the interest and signification attached to them, and at the same time renders

the imitation of them critically nice, by making any departure from the line of truth doubly sensible. Mr Coleridge used to say, that what gave the romantic and mysterious interest to Salvator's landscapes was their containing some implicit analogy to human or other living forms. His rocks had a latent resemblance to the outline of a human face ; his trees had the distorted, jagged shape of a satyr's horns and grotesque features. I do not think this is the case ; but it may serve to supply us with an illustration of the present question. Suppose a given outline to represent a human face, but to be so disguised by circumstances and little interruptions as to be mistaken for a projecting fragment of rock in natural scenery. As long as we conceive of this outline merely as a representation of a rock or other inanimate substance, any copy of it, however rude, will seem the same and as good as the original. Now let the disguise be removed and the general resemblance to a human face pointed out, and what before seemed perfect will be found to be deficient in the most essential features. Let it be further understood to be a profile of a particular face that we know, and all likeness will vanish from the want of the individual expression, which can only be given by being felt. That is, the imitation of external and visible form is only correct or nearly perfect, when the information of the eye and the direction of the hand are aided and confirmed by the previous knowledge and actual feeling of character in the object represented. The more there is of character and feeling in any object, and the greater sympathy there is with it in the mind of the artist, the closer will be the affinity between the imitation and the thing imitated ; as the more there is of character and expression in the object without a proportional sympathy with it in the imitator, the more obvious will this defect and the imperfection of the copy become. That is, expression is the great test and measure of a genius for painting and the fine arts. The mere

imitation of *still-life*, however perfect, can never furnish proofs of the highest skill or talent ; for there is an inner sense, a deeper intuition into nature that is never unfolded by merely mechanical objects, and which, if it were called out by a new soul being suddenly infused into an inanimate substance, would make the former unconscious representation appear crude and vapid. The eye is sharpened and the hand made more delicate in its tact,

“While by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.”

We not only see but feel expression by the help of the finest of all our senses, the sense of pleasure and pain. He then is the greatest painter who can put the greatest quantity of expression into his works, for this is the nicest and most subtle object of imitation ; it is that in which any defect is soonest visible, which must be able to stand the severest scrutiny, and where the power of avoiding errors, extravagance, or tameness can only be supplied by the fund of moral feeling, the strength or delicacy of the artist's sympathy with the ideal object of his imagination. To see or imitate any given sensible object is one thing, the effect of attention and practice ; but to give expression to a face is to collect its meaning from a thousand other sources, is to bring into play the observation and feeling of one's whole life, or an infinity of knowledge bearing upon a single object in different degrees and manners, and implying a loftiness and refinement of character proportioned to the loftiness and refinement of expression delineated. Expression is of all things the least to be mistaken, and the most evanescent in its manifestation. Pope's lines on the character of women may be addressed to the painter who undertakes to embody it:—

“Come then, the colours and the ground prepare,
Dip in the rainbow, trick it off in air ;
Choose a firm cloud, before it falls, and in it
Catch, ere it change, the Cynthia of the minute.”

It is a maxim among painters that no one can paint more than his own character, or more than he himself understands or can enter into. Nay, even in copying a head, we have some difficulty in making the features unlike our own. A person with a low forehead or a short chin puts a constraint on himself in painting a high forehead or a long chin. So much has sympathy to do with what is supposed to be a mere act of servile imitation ! To pursue this argument one step further. People sometimes wonder what difficulty there can be in painting, and ask what you have to do but to set down what you see. This is true, but the difficulty is to see what is before you. This is at least as difficult as to learn any trade or language. We imagine that we see the whole of nature, because we are aware of no more than we see of it. We also suppose that any given object, a head, a hand, is one thing because we see it at once, and call it by one name. But how little we see or know even of the most familiar face, beyond a vague abstraction, will be evident to every one who tries to recollect distinctly all its component parts, or to draw the most rude outline of it for the first time ; or who considers the variety of surface, the numberless lights and shades, the tints of the skin—every particle and pore of which varies—the forms and markings of the features, the combined expression ; and all these caught (as far as common use is concerned) by a random glance, and communicated by a passing word. A student when he first copies a head soon comes to a stand, or is at a loss to proceed from seeing nothing more in the face than there is in his copy. After a year or two's practice he never knows when to have done, and the longer he has been occupied in copying a face or any other particular feature, sees more and more in it that he has left undone and can never hope to do. There have been only four or five painters who could ever produce a copy of the human countenance really fit to be seen ; and even of these few none was ever perfect, except in giving some single

quality or partial aspect of nature, which happened to fall in with his own particular studies and the bias of his genius, as Raffaele the drawing, Rembrandt the light and shade, Vandyck ease and delicacy of appearance, &c. Titian gave more than any one else, and yet he had his defects. After this, shall we say that any, the commonest and most uninstructed, spectator sees the whole of nature at a single glance, and would be able to stamp a perfect representation of it on the canvas, if he could embody the image in his mind's eye?

I have in this essay mentioned one or two of the portraits in the Louvre that I like best. The two landscapes which I should most covet, are the one with a Rainbow by Rubens, and the "Adam and Eve in Paradise" by Poussin. In the first, shepherds are reposing with their flocks under the shelter of a breezy grove, the distances are of air, and the whole landscape seems just washed with the shower that has passed off. The "Adam and Eve" by Poussin is the full growth and luxuriant expansion of the principle of vegetation. It is the first lovely dawn of creation, when nature played her virgin fancies wild; when all was sweetness and freshness, and the heavens dropped fatness. It is the very ideal of landscape-painting, and of the scene it is intended to represent. It throws us back to the first ages of the world, and to the only period of perfect human bliss, which is, however, on the point of being soon disturbed.* I should be contented

* I may be allowed to mention here (not for the sake of invidious comparison, but to explain my meaning), Mr Martin's picture of "Adam and Eve asleep in Paradise." It has this capital defect, that there is no repose in it. You see two insignificant naked figures, and a preposterous architectural landscape like a range of buildings overlooking them. They might as well have been represented on the top of the pinnacle of the Temple, with the world and all the glories thereof spread out before them. They ought to have been painted imparadised in one another's arms, shut up in measureless content, with Eden's choicest bowers closing round them, and Nature stooping to clothe them with vernal flowers. Nothing could be too retired, too

with these four or five pictures—The “Lady” by Vandyck, the “Titian,” the “Presentation in the Temple,” the “Rubens,” and the “Poussin,” or even with faithful copies of them, added to the two which I have of a young Neapolitan Nobleman and of the Hippolito de Medici ; and which, when I look at them, recal other times and the feelings with which they were done. It is now twenty years since I made those copies, and I hope to keep them while I live. It seems to me no longer ago than yesterday. Should the next twenty years pass as swiftly, forty years will have glided by me like a dream. By this kind of speculation I can look down from a slippery height on the beginning and the end of life beneath my feet, and the thought makes me dizzy !

My taste in pictures is, I believe, very different from that of rich and princely collectors. I would not give twopence for the whole Gallery at Fonthill. I should like to have a few pictures hung round the room, that speak to me with well-known looks, that touch some string of memory—not a number of varnished, smooth, glittering gewgaws. The taste of the Great in pictures is singular, but not unaccountable. The King is said to prefer the Dutch to the Italian school of painting ; and if you hint your surprise at this, you are looked upon as a very Gothic and *outré* sort of person. You are told, however, by way of consolation, “To be sure, there is Lord Carlisle likes an Italian picture—Mr Holwell Carr likes an Italian picture—the Marquis of Stafford is fond of an Italian picture—Sir George Beaumont likes an Italian picture !” These, notwithstanding, are regarded as

voluptuous, too sacred from “day’s garish eye :” on the contrary, you have a gaudy panoramic view, a glittering barren waste, a triple row of clouds, of rocks, and mountains, piled one upon the other, as if the imagination already bent its idle gaze over that wide world which was so soon to be our place of exile, and the aching, restless spirit of the artist was occupied in building a stately prison for our first parents, instead of decking their bridal bed, and wrapping them in a short-lived dream of bliss.

quaint and daring exceptions to the established rule ; and their preference is a species of *lèse-majesté* in the Fine Arts, as great an eccentricity and want of fashionable etiquette, as if any gentleman or nobleman still preferred old claret to new, when the King is known to have changed his mind on this subject ; or was guilty of the offence of dipping his fore-finger and thumb in the middle of a snuff-box, instead of gradually approximating the contents to the edge of the box, according to the most approved models. One would imagine that the great and exalted in station would like lofty subjects in works of art, whereas they seem to have an almost exclusive predilection for the mean and mechanical. One would think those whose word was law would be pleased with the great and striking effects of the pencil ; * on the contrary, they admire nothing but the little and elaborate. They have a fondness for cabinet and furniture pictures, and a proportionable antipathy to works of genius. Even art with them must be servile to be tolerated. Perhaps the seeming contradiction may be explained thus. Such persons are raised so high above the rest of the species, that the more violent and agitating pursuits of mankind appear to them like the turmoil of ants on a mole-hill. Nothing interests them but their own pride and self-importance. Our passions are to them an impertinence ; an expression of high sentiment they rather shrink from as a ludicrous and upstart assumption of equality. They therefore like what glitters to the eye, what is smooth to the touch ; but they shun, by an instinct of sovereign taste, whatever has a soul in it, or implies a reciprocity of feeling. The Gods of the earth can have no interest in anything human ;

* The Duke of Wellington, it is said, cannot enter into the merits of Raffaele ; but he admires the " spirit and fire " of Titoret. I do not wonder at this bias. A sentiment probably never dawned upon his Grace's mind ; but he may be supposed to relish the dashing execution and light or misl manner of the Venetian artist. Oh, Raffaele ! well it is that it was *one* who did not understand thee that blundered upon the destruction of humanity !

they are cut off from all sympathy with the "bosoms and businesses of men." Instead of requiring to be wound up beyond their habitual feeling of stately dignity, they wish to have the springs of over-strained pretension let down to be relaxed with "trifles light as air," to be amused with the familiar and frivolous, and to have the world appear a scene of still life, except as they disturb it! The little in thought and internal sentiment is a natural relief and set-off to the oppressive sense of external magnificence. Hence kings babble and repeat they know not what. A childish dotage often accompanies the consciousness of absolute power. Repose is somewhere necessary, and the soul sleeps while the senses gloat around! Besides, the mechanical and high-finished style of art may be considered as something done to order. It is a task to be executed more or less perfectly, according to the price given and the industry of the artist. We stand by, as it were, to see the work done, insist upon a greater degree of neatness and accuracy, and exercise a sort of petty, jealous jurisdiction over each particular. We are judges of the minuteness of the details, and though ever so nicely executed, as they give us no ideas beyond what we had before, we do not feel humbled in the comparison. The artizan scarcely rises into the artist; and the name of genius is degraded rather than exalted in his person. The performance is so far ours that we have paid for it, and the highest price is all that is necessary to produce the highest finishing. But it is not so in works of genius and imagination. Their price is above rubies. The inspiration of the Muse comes not with the *fiat* of a monarch, with the donation of a patron; and, therefore, the Great turn with disgust or effeminate indifference from the mighty masters of the Italian school, because such works baffle and confound their self-love, and make them feel that there is something in the mind of man which they can neither give nor take away:

"Quam nihil ad tuum, Papiniane, ingenium!"

ON LADY MORGAN'S LIFE OF
SALVATOR ROSA.*

THERE are few works more engaging than those which reveal to us the private history of eminent individuals ; the lives of painters seem to be even more interesting than those of almost any other class of men ; and, among painters, there are few names of greater note, or that have a more powerful attraction, than that of Salvator Rosa. We are not sure, however, that Lady Morgan's work is not, upon the whole, more calculated to dissolve than to rivet the spell which these circumstances might, at first, throw over the reader's mind. The great charm of biography consists in the individuality of the details, the familiar tone of the incidents, the bringing us acquainted with the persons of men whom we have formerly known only by their works or names, the absence of all exaggeration or pretension, and the immediate appeal to facts instead of theories. We are afraid that, if tried by these rules, Lady Morgan will be found not to have written biography. A great part of the work is, accordingly, very fabulous and apocryphal. We are supplied with a few anecdotes or striking traits, and have few *data* to go upon, during the early and most anxious period of Salvator's life ; but a fine opportunity is in this way afforded to conjecture how he did or did not pass his time ; in what manner, and at what precise era, his peculiar talents first developed themselves ; and how he must have felt in certain situations, supposing him ever to have been placed in them. In one place, for example, she employs several pages in describing

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Salvator's being taken by his father from his village-home to the College of Somasco, with a detailed account of the garments in which he and his father may be presumed to have been dressed ; the adieus of his mother and sisters, the streets, the churches by which they passed ; in short ; with an admirable panoramic view of the city of Naples and its environs, as it would appear to any modern traveller ; and an assurance at the end, that " such was the scenery of the Vomiro in the beginning of the seventeenth century ; such is it now ! " Added to all which, we have, at every turn, pertinent allusions to celebrated persons who visited Rome and Italy in the same century, and perhaps wandered in the same solitudes, or were hid in the recesses of the same ruins ; and learned dissertations on the state of the arts, sciences, morals, and politics, from the earliest records up to the present day. On the meagre thread of biography, in short, Lady Morgan has been ambitious to string the flowers of literature and the pearls of philosophy, and to strew over the obscure and half-forgotten origin of poor Salvator the colours of a sanguine enthusiasm and florid imagination ! So fascinated, indeed, is she with the splendour of her own style, that whenever she has a simple fact or well-authenticated anecdote to relate, she is compelled to apologise for the homeliness of the circumstance, as if the flat realities of her story were unworthy accompaniments to the fine imaginations with which she has laboured to exalt it.

We could have wished, certainly, that she had shown less pretension in this respect. Women write well only when they write naturally ; and, therefore, we could dispense with their inditing prize-essays or solving academic questions ; and should be far better pleased with Lady Morgan if she would condescend to a more ordinary style, and not insist continually on playing the diplomatist in petticoats, and strutting the little Gibbon of her age !

Another circumstance that takes from the interest of the

present work is, that the subject of it was both an author and an artist, or, as Lady Morgan somewhat affectedly expresses it, a painter-poet. It is chiefly in the latter part of this compound character, or as a satirist, comic writer, and actor, that he comes upon the stage in these volumes ; and the enchantment of the scene is hurt by it.

The great secret of our curiosity respecting the lives of painters is, that they seem to be a different race of beings, and to speak a different language from ourselves. We want to see what is the connecting link between pictures and books, and how colours will translate into words. There is something mystical and anomalous to our conceptions in the existence of persons who talk by natural signs, and express their thoughts by pointing to the objects they wish to represent. When they put pen to paper, it is as if a dumb person should stammer out his meaning for the first time, or as if the bark of a tree (repeating the miracle in Virgil) should open its lips and discourse. We have no notion how Titian could be witty, or Raffaele learned ; and we wait for the solution of the problem, as for the result of some curious experiment in natural history. Titian's acquitting himself of a compliment to Charles V. or Raffaele's writing a letter to a friend, describing his idea of the Galatea, excites our wonder, and holds us in a state of breathless suspense, more than the first having painted all the master-pieces of the Escorial, or than the latter having realised the divine idea in his imagination. Because they have a language which we want, we fancy they must want, or cannot be at home in ours ; we start and blush to find that, though few are painters, all men are, and naturally must be, orators and poets. We have a stronger desire to see the autographs of artists than of authors or emperors ; for we somehow cannot imagine in what manner they would form their tottering letters, or sign their untaught names. We, in fact, exercise a sort of mental superiority and imaginary patronage over them (delightful in proportion as it is mixed

up with a sense of awe and homage in other respects); watch their progress like that of grown children; are charmed with the imperfect glimmerings of wit or sense; and secretly expect to find them—or express all the impertinence of an affected surprise if we do not—what Claude Lorraine is here represented to have been out of his painting-room, little better than natural changelings and drivellers. It pleases us, therefore, to be told that Gaspar Poussin, when he was not painting, rode a-hunting; that Nicolas was (it is pretended) a miser and a pedant—that Domenichino was retired and modest, and Guido and Annibal Caracci unfortunate! This is as it should be, and flatters our self-love. Their works stand out to ages bold and palpable, and dazzle or inspire by their beauty and their brilliancy. That is enough; the rest sinks into the ground of obscurity, or it is only brought out as something odd and unaccountable by the patient efforts of good-natured curiosity. But all this fine theory and flutter of contradictory expectations are balked and knocked on the head at once, when, instead of a dim and shadowy figure in the background, a mere name, of which nothing is remembered but its immortal works, a poor creature performing miracles of art, and not knowing how it has performed them, a person steps forward, bold, gay, *gaillard*, with all his faculties about him, master of a number of accomplishments which he is not backward to display, mingling with the throng, looking defiance around, able to answer for himself, acquainted with his own merits, and boasting of them; not merely having the gift of speech, but a celebrated *improvisatore* musician, comic actor and buffoon, patriot and cynic, reciting and talking equally well, taking up his pen to write satires, and laying it down to paint them. There is a vulgarity in all this practical bustle and restless stage-effect, that takes away from that abstracted and simple idea of Art which at once attracts and baffles curiosity like a distinct element in nature. “Painting,” said Michael

Angelo, "is jealous, and requires the whole man to herself." And there is something sacred and privileged in the character of those heirs of fame and their noiseless reputation, which ought not, we think, to be gossiped to the air, babbled to the echo, or proclaimed by beat of drum at the corners of streets, like a procession or a puppet-show. We may peep and pry into the ordinary life of painters, but it will not do to strip them stark naked. A speaking portrait of them, an anecdote or two, an expressive saying dropped by chance, an incident marking the bent of their genius, or its fate, are delicious; but here we should draw the curtain, or we shall profane this sort of image-worship. Least of all do we wish to be entertained with private brawls, or professional squabbles, or multifarious pretensions. "The essence of genius," as Lady Morgan observes, "is concentration." So is that of enthusiasm. We lay down the "*Life and Times of Salvator Rosa*," therefore, with less interest in the subject than when we took it up. We had rather not read it. Instead of the old and floating traditions on the subject—instead of the romantic name and romantic pursuits of the daring copyist of Nature, conversing with her rudest forms, or lost in lonely musing—eyeing the clouds that roll over his head, or listening to the waterfall, or seeing the fresh breeze waving the mountain-pines, or leaning against the side of an impending rock, or marking the bandit who issues from its clefts, "housing with wild men, with wild usages," himself unharmed and free—and bequeathing the fruit of his uninterrupted retirement and out-of-doors studies as the best legacy to posterity—we have the Coviello of the Carnival, the *causeur* of the saloons, the political malcontent, the satirist, sophist, caricaturist, the trafficker with Jews, the wrangler with Courts and Academies, and, last of all, the painter of history, despising his own best works, and angry with all who admired or purchased them.

The worst fault that Lady Morgan has committed is in

siding with this infirmity of poor Salvator, and pampering him into a second Michael Angelo. The truth is, that the judgment passed upon him by his contemporaries was right in this respect. He was a great landscape-painter; but his histories were comparatively forced and abortive. If this had been merely the opinion of his enemies, it might have been attributed to envy and faction; but it was no less the deliberate sentiment of his friends and most enthusiastic partisans; and if we reflect on the nature of our Artist's genius or his temper, we shall find that he could not well have been otherwise. This, from a child, was wayward, indocile, wild and irregular, unshackled, impatient of restraint, and urged on equally by success or opposition into a state of jealous and morbid irritability. Those, who are at war with others, are not at peace with themselves. It is the uneasiness, the turbulence, the acrimony within, that recoils upon external objects. Barry abused the Academy, because he could not himself paint. If he could have painted up to his own idea of perfection, he would have thought this better than exposing the ill-directed efforts or groundless pretensions of others. Salvator was rejected by the Academy of St Luke, and excluded, in consequence of his hostility to reigning authorities and his unlicensed freedom of speech, from the great works and public buildings in Rome; and though he scorned and ridiculed those by whose influence this was effected, yet neither the smiles of friends and fortune, nor the flatteries of fame, which in his lifetime had spread his name over Europe, and might be confidently expected to extend it to a future age, could console him for the loss, which he affected to despise, and would make no sacrifice to obtain. He was, indeed, hard to please. He denounced his rivals and maligners with bitterness; and with difficulty tolerated the enthusiasm of his disciples or the services of his patrons. He was at all times full of indignation, with or without cause. He was easily exasperated, and not

willing soon to be appeased, or to subside into a repose and good humour again. He slighted what he did best ; and seemed anxious to go out of himself. In a word, irritability, rather than sensibility, was the category of his mind ; he was more distinguished by violence and restlessness of will than by dignity or power of thought. The truly great, on the contrary, are sufficient to themselves, and so far satisfied with the world. " Their mind to them a kingdom is," from which they look out, as from a high watch-tower or noble fortress, on the passions, the cabals, the meannesses and follies of mankind. They shut themselves up " in measureless content ;" or soar to the great, discarding the little ; and appeal from envious detraction or " unjust tribunals under change of times " to posterity. They are not satirists, cynics, nor the prey of these ; but painters, poets, and philosophers.

Salvator was the victim of a too morbid sensibility, or of early difficulty and disappointment. He was always quarrelling with the world, and lay at the mercy of his own piques and resentments. But antipathy, the spirit of contradiction, captious discontent, fretful impatience, produce nothing fine in character ; neither dwell on beauty, nor pursue truth, nor rise into sublimity. The splenetic humourist is not the painter of humanity. Landscape-painting is the obvious resource of misanthropy. Our artist, escaping from the herd of knaves and fools, sought out some rude solitude, and found repose there. Teased by the impertinence, stung to the quick by the injustice of mankind, the presence of the works of nature would be a relief to his mind, and would, by contrast, stamp her striking features more strongly there. In the coolness, in the silence, in the untamed wildness of mountain scenery, in the lawless manners of its inhabitants, he would forget the fever and the anguish, and the artificial restraints of society. We, accordingly, do not find in Salvator's rural scenes either natural beauty and fertility, or even the

simply grand ; but whatever seizes attention by presenting a barrier to the will, or scorning the power of mankind, or snapping asunder the chain that binds us to them, the barren, the abrupt, wild, sterile regions, the steep rock, the mountain torrent, the bandit's cave, the hermit's cell—all these, while they released him from more harassing and painful reflections, soothed his moody spirit with congenial gloom, and found a sanctuary and a home there. Not only is there a corresponding determination and a singleness of design in his landscapes (excluding every approach to softness, or pleasure, or ornament), but the strength of the impression is confirmed even by the very touch and mode of handling ; he brings us in contact with the objects he paints ; and the sharpness of a rock, the roughness of the bark of a tree, or the ruggedness of a mountain path are marked in the freedom, the boldness, and firmness of his pencilling. There is not in Salvator's scenes the luxuriant beauty and divine harmony of Claude, nor the amplitude of Nicolas Poussin, nor the gorgeous richness of Titian—but there is a deeper seclusion, a more abrupt and total escape from society, a more savage wildness and grotesqueness of form, a more earthy texture, a fresher atmosphere, a more obstinate resistance to all the effeminate refinements of art. Salvator Rosa then is, beyond all question, the most romantic of landscape-painters ; because the very violence and untractableness of his temper threw him with instinctive force upon those objects in nature which would be most likely to soothe and disarm it ; while, in history, he is little else than a caricaturist (we mean compared with such men as Raffaello, Michael Angelo, &c.), because the same acrimony and impatience have made him fasten on those subjects and aspects of the human mind which would most irritate and increase it ; and he has, in this department, produced chiefly distortion and deformity, sullenness and rage, extravagance, squalidness, and poverty of appearance. But it is time to break off this long and pre-

mature digression, into which our love of justice and of the Arts (which requires, above all, that no more than justice should be done to any one) had led us, and return to the elegant but somewhat fanciful specimen of biography before us. Lady Morgan (in her flattery of the dead, the most ill-timed and unprofitable, but least disgusting of all flattery) has spoken of the historical compositions of Salvator in terms that leave no distinction between him and Michael Angelo ; and we could not refrain from entering our protest against such an inference, and have thus commenced our account of her book with what may appear at once a piece of churlish criticism and a want of gallantry.

The materials of the first volume, containing the account of Salvator's outset in life, and early struggles with fortune and his art, are slender, but spun out at great length, and steeped in very brilliant dyes. The contents of the second volume, which relate to a period when he was before the public, was in habits of personal intimacy with his future biographers, and made frequent mention of himself in letters to his friends which are still preserved, are more copious and authentic, and on that account—however Lady Morgan may wonder at it—more interesting. Of the artist's infant years little is known, and little told ; but that little is conveyed with all the “pride, pomp, and circumstance” of glorious authorship. It is said that the whole matter composing the universe might be compressed in a nutshell, taking away the porous interstices and flimsy appearances ; so we apprehend, that all that is really to be learnt of the subject of these Memoirs from the first volume of his life, might be contained in a single page of solid writing.

It appears that our artist was born in 1615, of poor parents, in the Borgo de Renella, near Naples. His father, Vito Antonio Rosa, was an architect and land surveyor,

and his mother's name was Giulia Grecca, who had also two daughters. Salvator very soon lost his full baptismal name for the nickname of Salvatoriello, in consequence of his mischievous tricks and lively gesticulations when a boy; or, more probably, this was the common diminutive of it given to all children. He was intended by his parents for the church, but early showed a truant disposition, and a turn for music and drawing. He used to scrawl with burnt sticks on the walls of his bed-room, and was caught in the fact of sketching outlines on the chapel walls of the Certosa when some priests were going by to mass, for which he was severely whipped. He was then sent to school at the monastery of the Somasco, in Naples, where he remained for two years, and laid in a good stock of classical learning, of which he made great use in his after life, both in his poems and pictures. Salvator's first knowledge of painting was imbibed in the workshop of Francesco Francanzani (a painter at that time of some note in Naples), who had married one of his sisters, and under whose eye he began his professional studies. Soon after this he is supposed to have made a tour through the mountains of the Abruzzi, and to have been detained a prisoner by the banditti there. On the death of his father, he endeavoured to maintain his family by sketches in landscape or history, which he sold to the brokers in Naples; and one of these (his "Hagar in the Wilderness") was noticed and purchased by the celebrated Lanfranco, who was passing the broker's shop in his carriage. Salvator, finding it in vain to struggle any longer with chagrin and poverty in his native place, went to Rome, where he met with little encouragement, and fell sick, and once more returned to Naples. An accident, or rather the friendship of an old school-fellow, now introduced him into the suite of the Cardinal Brancaccia, and his picture of Prometheus brought him into general notice, and recalled him to Rome. About the same time he appeared in the Carnival with prodigious *éclat* as an *improvisatore* and comic

actor ; and from this period may be dated the commencement of his public life as a painter, a satirist, and a man of general talents.

Except on these few tangible points the manuscript yawns dreadfully ; but Lady Morgan, whose wit or courage never flags, fills up the hollow spaces, and “skins and films the missing part,” with an endless and dazzling profusion of digressions, invectives, and hypotheses, magnifying trifles, and enlarging on the possibilities of her subject. Salvator was born in 1615 ; and as the birth of princes is announced by the discharge of artillery and the exhibition of fireworks, her ladyship thinks proper to usher in the birth of her hero with an explosion of imagery and declamation ; she then gets down to the humble parentage of her hero, and after telling us that his father was chiefly anxious that he should *not* be an artist, and that both parents resolved to dedicate him to religion, she proceeds to record that he gave little heed to his future vocation, but manifested various signs of a disposition for all the Fine Arts. This occasioned considerable uneasiness and opposition on the part of those who had destined him to be something very different ; and “the cord of paternal authority, drawn to its extreme tension, was naturally snapped.” And upon this her volatile pen takes its roving flight.

“The truant Salvatoriello fled from the restraints of an uncongenial home—from Albert le Grand and Santa Caterina di Stemma—and took shelter among those sites and scenes whose imagery soon became a part of his own intellectual existence, and were received as impressions long before they were studied as subjects. Sometimes he was discovered by the Padre Creatore, of the convent of Renella, among the rocks and caverns of Buia; the ruined temples of gods, and the haunts of sybils ; sometimes he was found by a gossip of Madonna Giulia, in her pilgrimage to a “maesta,” sleeping among the wastes of the Solfatara, beneath the scorched branches of a blasted tree, his head

pillowed by lava, and his dream most probably the vision of an infant poet's slumbers, for even then he was

‘ The youngest he
That sat in shadow of Apollo's tree,’

seeing nature with a poet's eye, and sketching her beauties with a painter's hand.”

Now this is well imagined and quaintly expressed ; it pleases the fair writer, and should offend nobody else. But we cannot say quite so much of the note which is appended to it, and couched in the following terms :—

“ Rosa drew his first impressions from the magnificent scenery of Pausilippo and Vesuvius ; Hogarth found his in a pot-house at Highgate, where a drunken quarrel and a broken nose ‘first woke the god within him.’ Both, however, reached the sublime in their respective vocations—Hogarth in the grotesque and Salvator in the majestic !”

Really these critics who have crossed the Alps take great liberties with the rest of the world, nor recover from a certain giddiness ever after. In the eagerness of partisanship, the fair author here falsifies the class to which these two painters belonged. Hogarth did not excel in the “grotesque,” but in the ludicrous and natural ; nor Salvator in the “majestic,” but in the wild and gloomy features of man or nature ; and in talent Hogarth had the advantage, a million to one. It would not be too much to say that he was, probably, the greatest observer of manners and the greatest comic genius that ever lived. We know no one, whether painter, poet, or prose-writer—not even Shakespeare—who, in his peculiar department, was so teeming with life and invention, so o’er-informed with matter, so “full to overflowing” as Hogarth was. We shall not attempt to calculate the quantity of pleasure and amusement his pictures have afforded, for it is quite incalculable. As to the distinction between “high and low,” in matters of genius, we shall leave it to her ladyship's other critics. But

shall Hogarth's world of truth and nature (his huge total farce of human life) be reduced to a "drunken quarrel and a broken nose?" We will not retort this sneer by any insult to Salvator; he did not paint his pictures in opposition to Hogarth. There is an air about his landscapes sacred to our imaginations, though different from the close atmosphere of Hogarth's scenes; and not the less so, because the latter could paint something better than "a broken nose." Nothing provokes us more than these exclusive and invidious comparisons, which seek to raise one man of genius by setting down another, and which suppose that there is nothing to admire in the greatest talents unless they can be made a foil to bring out the weak points or nominal imperfections of some fancied rival.

We might transcribe, for the entertainment of the reader, the passage to which we have already referred, describing Salvator's departure, in the company of his father, for the college of the Congregazione Somasco; but we prefer one which, though highly-coloured and somewhat dramatic, is more to our purpose—the commencement of Salvator's studies as an artist under his brother-in-law, Francanzani. It appears that Salvator, after he left the brotherhood of the Somasco, with more poetry than logic in his head, devoted himself to music, and Lady Morgan precludes her narration with the following passage:—

"All poetry and passion, his young muse 'dallied with the innocence of love;' and inspired strains which, though the simple breathings of an ardent temperament, the exuberance of youthful excitement, and an over-teeming sensibility, were assigning him a place among the first Italian lyriists of the age. Little did he then dream that posterity would apply the rigid rules of criticism to the 'idle visions' of his boyish fancy, or that his bars and basses would be connd and analysed by the learned umpires of future ages—declared "not only admirable for a *dilettante*, but, in point of melody, superior to that of

most of the masters of his time.' It happened at this careless, gay, but not idle period of Salvator's life, that an event occurred which hurried on his vocation to that art to which his parents were so determined that he should not addict himself, but to which Nature had so powerfully directed him. His probation of adolescence was passed; his hour was come; and he was about to approach that temple whose threshold he modestly and poetically declared himself unworthy to pass.

‘ Del immortalide al tempio augusto
Dove serba la gloria e i suoi tesori.’

“ At one of the popular festivities annually celebrated at Naples in honour of the Madonna, the beauty of Rosa's elder sister captivated the attention of a young painter who, though through life unknown to fortune, was not even then ‘unknown to fame.’ The celebrated and unfortunate Francesco Francanzani, the innamorato of La Signorina Rosa, was a distinguished pupil of the Spagnuolo school; and his picture of San Giuseppe, for the Chiesa Pellegrini, had already established him as one of the first painters of his day. Francanzani, like most of the young Neapolitan painters of his time, was a turbulent and factious character, vain and self-opinionated; and, though there was in his works a certain grandeur of style, with great force and depth of colouring, yet the impatience of his disappointed ambition, and indignation at the neglect of his acknowledged merit, already rendered him reckless of public opinion.

“ It was the peculiar vanity of the painters of that day to have beautiful wives. Albano had set the example [as if any example need be set, or the thing had been done in concert]; Domenichino followed it to his cost; Rubens turned it to the account of his profession; and Francanzani, still poor and struggling, married the portionless daughter of the most indigent artist in Naples, and thought, perhaps,

more of the model than the wife. This union, and still more a certain sympathy in talent and character between the brothers-in-law, frequently carried Salvator to the stanza or work-room of Francesco. Francesco, by some years the elder, was then deep in the faction and intrigues of the Neapolitan school, and was endowed with that bold eloquence which, displayed upon bold occasions, is always so captivating to young auditors. It was at the foot of his kinsman's easel, and listening to details which laid, perhaps, the foundation of that contemptuous opinion he cherished through life for schools, academies, and all incorporated pedantry and pretension,* that Salvator occasionally amused himself in copying, on any scrap of board or paper which fell in his way, whatever pleased him in Francesco's pictures. His long-latent genius, thus accidentally awakened, resembled the *acqua buja*, whose cold and placid surface kindles like spirits on the contact of a spark. In these first rude and hasty sketches, Francanzani, as Passeri informs us, saw '*molti segni d'un indole spiritoso*' (great signs of talent and genius); and he frequently encouraged, and sometimes corrected, the copies which so nearly approached the originals. But Salvator, who was destined to imitate none, but to be imitated by many, soon grew impatient of repeating another's conceptions, and of following in an art in which he already perhaps felt with prophetic throes, that he was born to lead. His visits to the workshop of Francanzani grew less frequent; his days were given to the scenes of his infant wanderings; he departed with the dawn, laden with his portfolio filled with primed paper, and a pallet covered with oil colours; and it is said that even then he not only sketched, but coloured from nature. When the pedantry of criticism (at the suggestion of envious rivals) accused him of having acquired, in his colouring,

* Why so? Was it not said just before that this painter was deep in the Neapolitan school? But Lady Morgan will have it so, and we cannot contradict her.

too much of the 'impasting of the *Spagnuolo* school, it was not aware that his faults, like his beauties, were original ; and that he sinned against the rules of art, only because he adhered too faithfully to nature."—(Salvator's flesh colour is as remarkably dingy and *Spagnuolettish*, as the tone of his landscapes is fresh and clear.)—"Returning from these arduous but not profitless rambles, through wildernesses and along precipices, impervious to all save the enterprise of fearless genius, he sought shelter beneath his sister's roof, where a kinder welcome awaited him than he could find in that home where it had been decreed from his birth that he should not be a painter.

"Francanzani was wont, on the arrival of his brother-in-law, to rifle the contents of his portfolio ; and he frequently found there compositions hastily thrown together, but selected, drawn, and coloured with a boldness and a breadth which indicated the confidence of a genius sure of itself. The first accents of 'the thrilling melody of sweet renown' which ever vibrated to the heart of Salvator, came to his ear on these occasions in the Neapolitan *patois* of his relation who, in glancing by lamp-light over his labours, would pat him smilingly on the head, and exclaim, '*Fruscia, fruscia, Salvatoricello, che va buono ?*' ('Go on, go on, this is good')—simple plaudits, but frequently remembered in aftertimes (when the dome of the Pantheon had already rung with the admiration extorted by his *Regulus*) as the first which cheered him in his arduous progress."

The reader cannot fail to observe here how well everything is made out ; how agreeably everything is assumed ; how difficulties are smoothed over, little abruptnesses rounded off ; how each circumstance falls into its place just as it should, and answers to a preconceived idea, like the march of a verse or the measure of a dance ; and how completely that imaginary justice is everywhere done to the subject which, according to Lord Bacon, gives poetry so decided an

advantage over history ! Yet this is one of our fair authoress's most severe and literal passages. Her prose-Muse is furnished with wings ; and the breeze of Fancy carries her off her feet from the plain ground of matter-of-fact, whether she will or no. Lady Morgan, in this part of her subject, takes occasion to animadvert on an opinion of Sir Joshua's respecting our artist's choice of a particular style of landscape-painting.

"*Salvator Rosa*," says Sir J. Reynolds, "*saw the necessity of trying some new source of pleasing the public in his works. The world were tired of Claude Lorraine's and G. Poussin's long train of imitators.*

"*Salvator therefore struck into a wild, savage kind of nature, which was new and striking.*"

"The first of these paragraphs contains a strange anachronism. When Salvator struck into a new line, Poussin and Claude who, though his elders, were his contemporaries, had as yet no train of imitators. The one was struggling for a livelihood in France, the other was cooking and grinding colours for his master at Rome. Salvator's early attachment to Nature in her least imitated forms was not the result of speculation having any reference to the public ; it was the operation of original genius, and of those particular tendencies which seemed to be breathed into his soul at the moment it first quickened. From his cradle to his tomb he was the creature of impulse, and the slave of his own vehement volitions."

We think this is spirited and just. Sir Joshua, who borrowed from almost all his predecessors in art, was now and then a little too ready to detract from them. We dislike these attempts to explain away successful talent into a species of studied imposture—to attribute genius to a plot, originality to a trick. Burke, in like manner, accused Rousseau of the same kind of *malice prepense* in bringing forward his paradoxes—as if he did it on a

theory, or to astonish the public, and not to give vent to his peculiar humours and singularity of temperament.

We next meet with a poetical version of a picturesque tour undertaken by Salvator among the mountains of the Abruzzi, and of his detention by the banditti there. We have much fine writing on the subject; but after a world of charming theories and romantic conjectures, it is left quite doubtful whether this last event ever took place at all—at least we could wish there was some better confirmation of it than a vague rumour, and an etching by Salvator of a “Youth taken captive by Banditti, with a Female Figure pleading his cause,” which the historian at once identifies with the adventures of the artist himself, and “moralises into a thousand similes.” We are indemnified for the dearth of satisfactory evidence on this point by animated and graceful transitions to the history and manners of the Neapolitan banditti, their physiognomical distinctions and political intrigues, to the grand features of mountain scenery, and the character of Salvator's style, founded on all these exciting circumstances, real or imaginary. On the death of his father, Vito Antonio, which happened when he was about seventeen, the family were thrown on his hands for support, and he struggled for some time with want and misery, which he endeavoured to relieve by his hard bargains with the *rivenditori* (picture-dealers) in the Strada della Carità, till necessity and chagrin forced him to fly to Rome. The purchase of his “Hagar” by Lanfranco is the only bright streak in this period of his life, which cheered him for a moment with faint delusive hope.

The art of writing may be said to consist in thinking of nothing but one's subject; the art of book-making, on the contrary, can only subsist on the principle of laying hands on everything that can supply the place of it. The author of the “Life and Times of Salvator Rosa,” though devoted to her hero, does not scruple to leave him sometimes, and

to occupy many pages with his celebrated contemporaries, Domenichino, Lanfranco, Caravaggio, and the sculptor Bernini, the most splendid coxcomb in the history of Art, and the spoiled child of vanity and patronage. Before we take leave of Naples, we must introduce our readers to some of this good company, and pay our court in person. We shall begin with Caravaggio, one of the characteristic school both in mind and manners. The account is too striking, in many respects, to be passed over, and affords a fine lesson on the excesses and untamed irregularities of men of genius.

“In the early part of the seventeenth century the manner of the Neapolitan school was purely *Caravaggesque*. Michael Angelo Amoreghi, better known as ‘Il Caravaggio’ (from the place of his birth in the Milanese, where his father held no higher rank than that of a stone-mason), was one of those powerful and extraordinary geniuses which are destined by their force and originality to influence public taste, and master public opinion, in whatever line they start. The Roman School, to which the almost celestial genius of Raffaele had so long been as a tutelary angel, sinking rapidly into degradation and feebleness, suddenly arose again under the influence of a new chief, whose professional talent and personal character stood opposed in the strong relief of contrast to that of his elegant and poetical predecessor.

“The influence of this ‘*uomo intractabile e brutale*,’ this passionate and intractable man, as he is termed by an Italian historian of the Arts, sprang from the depression of the school which preceded him. Nothing less than the impulsion given by the force of contrast, and the shock occasioned by a violent change, could have produced an effect on the sinking Art such as proceeded from the strength and even coarseness of Caravaggio. He brought back nature triumphant over mannerism—nature, indeed, in all the exaggeration of strong motive and overbearing

velition; but still it was nature; and his bold example dissipated the languor of exhausted imitation, and gave excitement even to the tamest mediocrity and the feeblest conception. . . . When on his first arrival in Rome (says Bellori) the *cognoscenti* advised him to study from the antiques, and take Raffaele as his model, he used to point to the promiscuous groups of men and women passing before him, and say, 'those were the models and the masters provided him by Nature.' Teased one day by a pedant on the subject, he stopped a gipsy-girl who was passing by his window, called her in, placed her near his easel, and produced his splendid 'Zingra in atto di predire l'aventure,' his well-known and exquisite Egyptian Fortune-teller. His 'Gamblers' was done in the same manner.

"The temperament which produced this peculiar genius was necessarily violent and gloomy. Caravaggio tyrannised over his school, and attacked his rivals with other arms than those of his art. He was a professed duellist; and, having killed one of his antagonists in a rencontre, he fled to Naples, where an asylum was readily granted him. His manner as a painter, his character as a man, were both calculated to succeed with the Neapolitan school; and the *maniera Caravaggesca* thenceforward continued to distinguish its productions, till the art there, as throughout all Europe, fell into utter degradation, and became lost almost as completely as it had been under the Lower Empire.

"In a warm dispute with one of his own young friends in a tennis-court, he had struck him dead with a racket, having been himself severely wounded. Notwithstanding the triumphs with which he was loaded in Naples, where he executed some of his finest pictures, he soon got weary of his residence there, and went to Malta. His superb picture of the Grand Master obtained for him the cross of Malta, a rich golden chain, placed on his neck by the Grand Master's own hands, and two slaves to attend him.

But all these honours did not prevent the new knight from falling into his old habits. *Il suo torbido ingegno* (says Bellori) plunged him into new difficulties; he fought and wounded a noble cavalier, was thrown into prison by the Grand Master, escaped most miraculously, fled to Syracuse, and obtained the suffrages of the Syracusans by painting his splendid picture of the 'Santa Morte,' for the Church of Santa Lucia. In apprehension of being taken by the Maltese knights, he fled to Messina, from thence to Palermo, and returned to Naples, where hopes were given him of the Pope's pardon. Here, picking a quarrel with some military men at an inn door, he was wounded, took refuge on board a felucca, and set sail for Rome. Arrested by a Spanish guard at a little port (where the felucca cast anchor) by mistake for another person, when released, he found the felucca gone, and in it all his property. Traversing the burning shore under a vertical sun, he was seized with a brain-fever, and continued to wander through the deserts of the Pontine Marshes, till he arrived at Porto Ercoli, when he expired in his fortieth year."

We have seen some of the particulars differently related; but this account is as probable as any; and it conveys a startling picture of the fate of a man led away by headstrong passions and the pride of talents—an intellectual outlaw, having no regard to the charities of life, or knowledge of his own place in the general scale of being. How different, how superior, and yet how little more fortunate, was the amiable and accomplished Domenichino (the "most sensible of painters"), who was about this time employed in painting the dome of St Januarius!

"Domenichino reluctantly accepted the invitation (1629); and he arrived at Naples with the zeal of a martyr devoted to a great cause, but with a melancholy foreboding, which harassed his noble spirit, and but ill prepared him for the persecution he was to encounter. Lodged under the special protection of the Deputati, in the 'Palazzo dell'

Archivescovato," adjoining the church, on going forth from his sumptuous dwelling the day after his arrival, he found a paper addressed to him sticking in the key-hole of his ante-room. It informed him that if he did not instantly return to Rome he should never return there with life. Domenichino immediately presented himself to the Spanish viceroy, the Conte Monterey, and claimed protection for a life then employed in the service of the church. The piety of the Count, in spite of his partiality to the faction [of Spagnuolletto], induced him to pledge the word of a grandee of Spain that Domenichino should not be molested; and from that moment a life, no longer openly assailed, was embittered by all that the littleness of malignant envy could invent to undermine its enjoyments and blast its hopes. Calumnies against his character, criticisms on his paintings, ashes mixed with his colours, and anonymous letters were the miserable means to which his rivals resorted; and to complete their work of malignity, they induced the viceroy to order pictures from him for the Court of Madrid; and when these were little more than laid in dead colours, they were carried to the viceregal palace, and placed in the hands of Spagnuolletto to retouch and alter at pleasure. In this disfigured and mutilated condition, they were despatched to the gallery of the King of Spain. Thus drawn from his great works by despotic authority, for the purpose of effecting his ruin, enduring the complaints of the Deputati, who saw their commission neglected, and suffering from perpetual calumnies and persecutions, Domenichino left the superb picture of the 'Martyrdom of San Gennaro,' which is now receiving the homage of posterity, and fled to Rome; taking shelter in the solemn shades of Frescati, where he resided some time under the protection of Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini. It was at this period that Domenichino was visited by his biographer Passeri, then an obscure youth, engaged to assist in the repairs of the pictures in the Cardinal's chapel. 'When we arrived at Frescati,' says

Passeri in his simple style, 'Domenichino received me with much courtesy ; and hearing that I took a singular delight in the belles-lettres, it increased his kindness to me. I remember that I gazed on this man as though he were an angel. I remained till the end of September occupied in restoring the chapel of St Sebastian, which had been ruined by the damp. Sometimes Domenichino would join us, singing delightfully to recreate himself as well as he could. When night set in we returned to our apartment, while he most frequently remained in his own, occupied in drawing, and permitting none to see him. Sometimes, however, to pass the time, he drew caricatures of us all, and of the inhabitants of the villa ; and when he succeeded to his satisfaction, he was wont to indulge in immoderate fits of laughter ; and we, who were in the adjoining room, would run in to know his reason, and then he showed us his spirited sketches (*spiritose galanterie*). He drew a caricature of me with a guitar, one of Canini the painter, and one of the guarda roba, who was lame with the gout, and of the subguarda roba, a most ridiculous figure. To prevent our being offended, he also caricatured himself. These portraits are now preserved by Signor Giovanni Pietro Bellori in his study, (*Vita di Domenichino*). Obligated, however, at length, to return to Naples to fulfil his fatal engagements, overwhelmed both in mind and body by the persecutions of his *soi-disant* patrons and his open enemies, he died, says Passeri, '*fra mille crepacuori*,' amidst a thousand heart breakings, with some suspicion of having been poisoned, in 1641."

We could wish Lady Morgan had preserved more of this simple style of Passeri. We confess we prefer it to her own more brilliant and artificial one ; for instance, to such passages as the following, describing Salvator's first entrance into the city of Rome.

"In entering the greatest city of the world at the Ave Maria, the hour of Italian recreation."—(Why must we

have entered it at this hour, except for the purpose of giving the author an apology for the following eloquent reflections ?)—“ In passing from the silent desolate suburbs of San Giovanni to the Corso (then a place of crowded and populous resort), where the princes of the Conclave presented themselves in all the pomp and splendour of Oriental satraps, the feelings of the young and solitary stranger must have suffered a revulsion, in the consciousness of his own misery. Never, perhaps, in the deserts of the Abruzzi, in the solitudes of Otranto, or in the ruins of Pæstum, did Salvator experience sensations of such utter loneliness as in the midst of this gaudy and multitudinous assemblage ; for in the history of melancholy sensations there are few comparable to that sense of isolation, to that desolateness of soul, which accompanies the first entrance of the friendless on a world where all, save they, have ties, pursuits and homes.”

When we come to passages like this, so buoyant, so airy, and so brilliant, we wish we could forget that history is not a pure voluntary effusion of sentiments, and that we could fancy ourselves reading a page of Mrs Radcliffe's *Italian*, or Miss Porter's *Thaddeus of Warsaw* ! Presently after we learn that “ Milton and Salvator, who, in genius, character and political views, bore no faint resemblance to each other, though living at the same time both in Rome and Naples, remained mutually unknown. The obscure and indigent young painter had, doubtless, no means of presenting himself to the great republican poet of England ; —if, indeed, he had then ever heard of one so destined to illustrate the age in which both flourished.”

This is the least apposite of all our author's critical juxtapositions ; if we except the continual running parallel between Salvator, Shakespeare, and Lord Byron, as the three demons of the imagination personified. Modern critics can no more confer rank in the lists of fame than modern heralds can confound new and old nobility.

Salvator's first decided success at Rome, or in his profession, was in his picture of "Prometheus," exhibited in the Pantheon when he was little more than twenty, and which stamped his reputation as an artist from that time forward, though it did not lay the immediate foundation of his fortune. In this respect, his rejection by the Academy of St Luke and the hostility of Bernini threw very considerable obstacles in his way. Lady Morgan celebrates the success of this picture at sufficient length and with enthusiastic sympathy, and accompanies the successive completion of his great historical efforts afterwards, the "Regulus," the "Purgatory," the "Job," the "Saul," and the "Conspiracy of Catiline," with appropriate comments; but, as we are tainted with heresy on this subject, we shall decline entering into it farther than to say generally, that we think the colouring of Salvator's flesh dingy, his drawing meagre, his expressions coarse or violent, and his choice of subjects morose and monotonous. The figures in his landscape-compositions are admirable for their spirit, force, wild interest, and daring character; but, in our judgment, they cannot stand alone as high history, nor, by any means, claim the first rank among epic or dramatic productions. His landscapes, on the contrary, as we have said before, have a boldness of conception, a unity of design, and felicity of execution which, if it does not fill the mind with the highest sense of beauty or grandeur, assign them a place by themselves, which invidious comparison cannot approach or divide with any competitor. They are original and perfect in their kind; and that kind is one that the imagination requires for its solace and support; is always glad to return to, and is never ashamed of, the wild and abstracted scenes of nature. Having said thus much by way of explanation, we hope we shall be excused from going farther into the details of an obnoxious hypercriticism, to which we feel an equal repugnance as professed worshippers of fame and genius! Our readers

will prefer, to our sour and fastidious (perhaps perverse) criticism the lively account which is here given of Salvator's first appearance in a new character—one of the masks of the Roman Carnival—which had considerable influence in his subsequent pursuits and success in life.

“Towards the close of the Carnival of 1639, when the spirits of the revellers (as is always the case in Rome) were making a brilliant rally for the representations of the last week, a car or stage highly ornamented, drawn by oxen and occupied by a masked troop, attracted universal attention by its novelty and singular representations. The principal personage announced himself as a certain Signor Formica, a Neapolitan actor who, in the character of Coviello, a charlatan, displayed so much genuine wit, such bitter satire, and exquisite humour, rendered doubly effective by a Neapolitan accent and national gesticulations, that other representations were abandoned ; and gipsies told fortunes and Jews hung in vain. The whole population of Rome gradually assembled round the novel, the inimitable Formica. The people relished his flashes of splenetic humour aimed at the great ; the higher orders were delighted with an *improvisatore* who, in the intervals of his dialogues, sang to the lute, of which he was a perfect master, the Neapolitan ballads, then so much in vogue. The attempts made by his fellow-revellers to obtain some share of the plaudits he so abundantly received, whether he spoke or sang, asked or answered questions, were all abortive : while he (says Baldinucci), ‘at the head of everything by his wit, eloquence, and brilliant humour, drew half Rome to himself.’ The contrast between his beautiful musical and poetical compositions, and those Neapolitan gesticulations in which he indulged, when, laying aside his lute, he presented his vials and salves to the delighted audience, exhibited a versatility of genius, which it was difficult to attribute to any individual then known in Rome. Guesses and suppositions were still vainly circulating among all classes, when, on the

close of the Carnival, Formica, ere he drove his triumphal car from the Piazza Navona, which, with one of the streets in the Trasevere, had been the principal scene of his triumph, ordered his troop to raise their masks, and, removing his own, discovered that Coviello was the sublime author of the 'Prometheus,' and his little troop the 'Partigiani' of Salvator Rosa. All Rome was from this moment (to use a phrase which all his biographers have adopted) 'filled with his fame.' That notoriety, which his high genius had failed to procure for him, was obtained at once by those lighter talents which he had nearly suffered to fall into neglect, while more elevated views had filled his mind."

Lady Morgan then gives a very learned and sprightly account of the characters of the old Italian comedy, with a notice of Molière and sprinklings of general reading, from which we have not room for an extract. Salvator, after this event, became the rage in Rome; his society and conversation were much sought after, and his *improvisatore* recitations of his own poetry, in which he sketched the outline of his future Satires, were attended by some of the greatest wits and most eminent scholars of the age. He on one occasion gave a burlesque comedy in ridicule of Bernini, the favourite court artist. This attack drew on him a resentment, the consequences of which, "like a wounded snake, dragged their slow length" through the rest of his life. Those who are the loudest and bitterest in their complaints of persecution and ill usage are the first to provoke it. In the warfare waged so fondly and (as it is at last discovered) so unequally with the world, the assailants and the sufferers will be generally found to be the same persons. We would not, by this indirect censure of Salvator, be understood to condemn or discourage those who have an inclination to go on the same forlorn hope; we merely wish to warn them of the nature of the service, and that they ought not to prepare for a triumph, but a

martyrdom ! If they are ambitious of that, let them take their course.

Salvator's success in his new attempt threw him in some measure from this time forward into the career of comedy and letters ; painting, however, still remained his principal pursuit and strongest passion. His various talents and agreeable accomplishments procured him many friends and admirers, though his hasty temper and violent pretensions often defeated their good intentions towards him. He wanted to force his histories down the throats of the public and of private individuals, who came to purchase his pictures, and turned from and even insulted those who praised his landscapes. This jealousy of a man's self, and quarrelling with the favourable opinion of the world, because it does not exactly accord with our own view of our merits, is one of the most tormenting and incurable of all follies. We subjoin the two following remarkable instances of it.

“The Prince Francesco Ximenes, having arrived in Rome, found time, in the midst of the honours paid to him, to visit Salvator Rosa ; and being received by the artist in his gallery, he told him frankly that he had come for the purpose of seeing and purchasing some of those beautiful small landscapes, whose manner and subjects had delighted him in many foreign galleries. ‘Be it known then to your Excellency,’ interrupted Rosa, impetuously, ‘that I know nothing of landscape-painting ! Something indeed I do know of painting figures and historical subjects, which I strive to exhibit to such eminent judges as yourself, in order that once for all I may banish from the public mind that fantastic humour of supposing I am a landscape, and not an historical, painter.’

“Shortly after, a very rich cardinal, whose name is not recorded, called on Salvator to purchase some pictures ; and as his Eminence walked up and down the gallery, he always paused before some certain *quadretti*, and never before the historical subjects, while Salvator muttered from

time to time between his clenched teeth, '*Sempre, sempre, prezzi piccoli.*' When at last the Cardinal glanced his eye over some great historical picture, and carelessly asked the price as a sort of company question, Salvator bellowed forth '*Un milione.*' His Eminence, stunned or offended, hurried away, and returned no more."

Other stories are told of the like import. And yet, if Salvator had been more satisfied in his own mind of the superiority of his historical pictures, he would have been less anxious to make others converts to his opinion. So shrewd a man ought to have been aware of the force of the proverb about nursing the rickety child.

One of the most creditable traits in the character of Salvator is the friendship of Carlo Rossi, a wealthy Roman citizen, who raised his prices and built a chapel to his memory; and one of the most pleasant and flattering to his talents is the rivalry of Messer Agli, an old Bolognese merchant, who came all the way to Florence (while Salvator was residing there) to enter the lists with him as the clown and quack-doctor of the *commedia della arte*.

We loiter on the way with Lady Morgan—which is a sign that we do not dislike her company, and that our occasional severity is less real than affected. She opens many pleasant vistas, and calls up numerous themes of never-failing interest. Would that we could wander with her under the azure skies and golden sunsets of Claude Lorraine, amidst classic groves and temples, and flocks, and herds, and winding streams, and distant hills, and glittering sunny vales,

*Where universal Peace
Kiss with the Green and the Heart of Nature,
Lies on the eternal spring."

or repose in Gargier Ponsin's cool grottoes, or on his breezy summits, or by his sparkling waterfalls! But we must not indulge too long in these delightful dreams. Time presses, and we must on. It is mentioned in this part of the narrative

which treats of Salvator's contemporaries and great rivals in landscape, that Claude Lorraine, besides his natural stupidity in all other things, was six-and-thirty before he began to paint (almost the age at which Raffaele died), and in ten years after was—what no other human being ever was or will be. The lateness of the period at which he commenced his studies, renders those unrivalled masterpieces which he has left behind him to all posterity a greater miracle than they would otherwise be. One would think that perfection required at least a whole life to attain it. Lady Morgan has described this divine artist very prettily and poetically; but her description of Gaspar Poussin is as fine, and might in some places be mistaken for that of his rival. This is not as it should be, since the distance is immeasurable between the productions of Claude Lorraine and all other landscapes whatever, with the single exception of Titian's backgrounds.* Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say (such was his opinion of the faultless beauty of his style) that "there would be another Raffaele before there was another Claude."

The first volume of the present work closes with a spirited account of the short-lived revolution at Naples, brought about by the celebrated Massaniello. Salvator contrived to be present at one of the meetings of the patriotic conspirators by torchlight, and has left a fine sketch of the unfortunate leader. An account of this memorable transaction will be found in Robertson, and a still more striking and genuine one in the "*Memoirs of Cardinal Retz*."

We must hasten through the second volume with more rapid strides. Salvator, after the failure and death of Massaniello, returned to Rome, disappointed, disheartened, and

* We might refer to the background of the St Peter Martyr. Claude, Gaspar, and Salvator could not have painted this one background among them! But we have already remarked that comparisons are odious.

gave vent to his feelings on this occasion by his two poems, "La Babilonia" and "La Guerra," which are full of the spirit of love and hatred, of enthusiasm and bitterness.* About the same time he painted his two allegorical pictures of "Human Frailty" and "Fortune." These were exhibited in the Pantheon, and from the sensation they excited and the sinister comments that were made on them, had nearly conducted Salvator to the Inquisition. In the picture of "Fortune" more particularly, "the nose of one powerful ecclesiastic and the eye of another were detected in the brutish physiognomy of the swine who were treading pearls and flowers under their feet; a Cardinal was recognised in an ass scattering with his hoof the laurel and myrtle which lay in his path, and in an old goat reposing on roses some there were who even fancied the infallible lover of Donna Olympia, the Sultana Queen of the Quirinal! The cry of atheism and sedition, of contempt of established authorities, was thus raised under the influence of private pique and long-cherished envy. It soon found an echo in the painted walls where the conclave sat 'in close divan,' and it was bandied about from mouth to mouth till it reached the ears of the Inquisitor, within the dark recesses of his house of terrors."

The consequence was that our artist was obliged to fly from Rome, after waiting a little to see if the storm would blow over, and to seek an asylum in the Court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany at Florence. Here he passed some of the happiest years of his life, flattered by princes, feasting nobles, conversing with poets, receiving the suggestions of critics, painting landscapes or history as he liked best, composing and reciting his own verses, and making a fortune, which he flung away again as soon as he had made

* The Cardinal Strozzi Pallavicini, having been present by his own request at the recitation of one of these pieces, and being asked his opinion, declared that "Salvator's poetry was full of splendid passages, but that, as a whole, it was unequal."

it with the characteristic improvidence of genius. Of the gay, careless, and friendly intercourse in which he passed his time the following passages give a very lively intimation :—

“It happened that Rosa, in one of those fits of idleness to which even his strenuous spirit was occasionally liable, flung down his pencil, and sallied forth to communicate the infection of his *far niente* to his friend Lippi. On entering his studio, however, he found him labouring with great impetuosity on the background of his picture of the ‘Flight into Egypt,’ but in such sullen vehemence or in such evident ill-humour, that Salvator demanded ‘Che fai, amico?’ ‘What am I about?’ said Lippi, ‘I am going mad with vexation. Here is one of my best pictures ruined : I am under a spell, and cannot even draw the branch of a tree, nor a tuft of herbage.’ ‘Signore Dio!’ exclaimed Rosa, twisting the palette off his friend’s thumb, ‘what colours are here?’ and scraping them off, and gently pushing away Lippi, he took his place, murmuring, ‘Let me see, who knows but I may help you out of the scrape?’ Half in jest and half in earnest, he began to touch and retouch and change, till nightfall found him at the easel, finishing one of the best background landscapes he ever painted. All Florence came next day to look at this *chef-d’œuvre*, and the first artists of the age took it as a study.

“A few days afterwards Salvator called upon Lippi, found him preparing a canvas, while Malatesta read aloud to him and Ludovico Serenai the astronomer the MS. of his poem of the ‘Sphinx.’ Salvator, with a noiseless step, took his seat in an old Gothic window, and placing himself in a listening attitude, with a bright light falling through stained glass upon his fine head, produced a splendid study, of which Lippi, without a word of his intention, availed himself, and executed with incredible rapidity the finest picture of Salvator that was ever painted. Several copies

of it were taken with Lippi's permission, and Ludovico Seranai purchased the original at a considerable price. In this picture Salvator is dressed in a cloth habit, with richly-slashed sleeves, turnovers, and a collar. It is only a head and bust, and the eyes are looking towards the spectator.

"At one time his impatience at being separated from Carlo Rossi and other friends was so great that he narrowly risked his safety to obtain an interview with them. About three years after he had been at Florence, he took post horses, and set off for Rome at midnight. Having arrived at an inn in the suburbs, he despatched messages to eighteen of his friends, who all came, thinking he had got into some new scrape, breakfasted with them, and returned to Florence, before his Roman persecutors or his Tuscan friends were aware of his adventure."

Salvator, however, was discontented even with this splendid lot, and sought to embower himself in entire seclusion and in deeper bliss in the palace of the Counts Maffei at Volterra, and in the solitudes in its neighbourhood. Here he wandered night and morn, drinking in that slow poison of reflection which his soul loved best—planning his "*Catiline Conspiracy*"—preparing his *Satires* for the press—and weeding out their Neapolitanisms, in which he was assisted by the fine taste and quick tact of his friend Redi. This appears to have been the only part of his life to which he looked back with pleasure or regret. He, however, left this enviable retreat soon after, to return to Rome, partly for family reasons, and partly, no doubt, because the deepest love of solitude and privacy does not wean the mind, that has once felt the feverish appetite, from the desire of popularity and distinction. Here, then, he planted himself on the Monte Pincio, in a house situated between those of Claude Lorraine and Nicolas Poussin, and used to walk out of an evening on the fine promenade near it, at the head of a group of gay cavaliers, musicians, and asphiring

artists; while Nicolas Poussin, the very genius of antiquity personified, and now bent down with age himself, led another band of reverential disciples, side by side with some learned virtuoso or pious churchman! Meantime, commissions poured in upon Salvator, and he painted successively his "Jonas" for the King of Denmark, his "Battle-piece" for Louis XIV., still in the Museum at Paris, and lastly, to his infinite delight, an "Altar-piece" for one of the churches in Rome. Salvator, about this time, seems to have imbibed (even before he was lectured on his want of economy by the Fool at the house of his friend Minucci) some idea of making the best use of his time and talents.

"The Constable Colonna (it is reported) sent a purse of gold to Salvator Rosa on receiving one of his beautiful landscapes. The painter, not to be outdone in generosity, sent the prince another picture as a present—which the prince insisted on remunerating with another purse; another present and another purse followed; and this struggle between generosity and liberality continued, to the tune of many other pictures and presents, until the prince, finding himself a loser by the contest, sent Salvator two purses, with an assurance that he gave in, *et lui cede le champ de bataille*."

Salvator was tenacious in demanding the highest prices for his pictures, and brooking no question as to any abatement; but when he had promised his friend Ricciardi a picture, he proposed to restrict himself to a subject of one or two figures; and they had nearly a quarrel about it.

"In April 1662," says his biographer, "and not long after his return to Rome, his love of wild and mountainous scenery, and, perhaps, his wandering tendencies, revived by his recent journey, induced him to visit Loretto, or at least to make that holy city the shrine of a pilgrimage, which it appears was one rather of taste than of devotion. His feelings on this journey are well described in one of his letters. 'I could not,' says Salvator, 'give you any

account of my return from Loretto, till I arrived here on the 6th of May. I was for fifteen days in perpetual motion. The journey was beyond all description curious and picturesque ; much more so than the route from hence to Florence. There is a strange mixture of savage wildness and domestic scenery, of plain and precipice, such as the eye delights to wander over. I can safely swear to you that the tints of these mountains by far exceed all I have ever observed under your Tuscan skies ; and as for your Verucola, which I once thought a dreary desert, I shall henceforth deem it a fair garden, in comparison with the scenes I have now explored in these Alpine solitudes. O God ! how often have I sighed to possess, how often since called to mind, those solitary hermitages which I passed on my way ! how often wished that fortune had reserved for me such a destiny ! I went by Ancona and Torolo, and on my return visited Assisa—all sites of extraordinary interest to the genius of painting. I saw at Terni (four miles out of the high road) the famous waterfall of Velino ; an object to satisfy the boldest imagination by its terrific beauty—a river dashing down a mountainous precipice of near a mile in height, and then flinging up its foam to nearly an equal altitude ! Believe, that while in this spot I moved not, saw not, without bearing you full in my mind and memory.' ”

He wrote another letter, of a later date, on his being employed to paint the altar of San Giovanni de' Fiorentini, thus pally :—

“*Non mi fa singolare*—Ring out the chimers ! At last, after thirty years’ existence in Rome, of hopes blasted and complaints rebelled against men and gods, the occasion is accorded me for giving one altar-piece to the public.”

His anxiety to finish this picture in time for a certain festival kept him, he adds, “shut out from all commerce of the pen, and from every other in the world ; and I can truly say that I have forgotten myself, even to neglecting

to eat ; and so arduous is my application that, when I had nearly finished, I was obliged to keep my bed for two days ; and had not my recovery been assisted by emetics, certain it is it would have been all over with me in consequence of some obstruction in the stomach. Pity me, then, dear friend, if for the glory of my pencil I have neglected to devote my pen to the service of friendship."—*Letter to the Abate Ricciardi.*

Passeri has left the following particulars, recorded of him on the day when this picture (the "Martyrdom of Saint Damian and Saint Cosmus") was first exhibited.

"He (Salvator) had at last exposed his picture in the San Giovanni de' Fiorentini ; and I, to recreate myself, ascended on that evening to the heights of Monte della Trinità, where I found Salvator walking arm-in-arm with Signor Giovanni Carlo dei Rossi, so celebrated for his performance on the harp of three strings, and brother to that Luigi Rossi, who is so eminent all over the world for his perfection in musical composition. And when Salvator (who was my intimate friend) perceived me, he came forward laughingly, and said to me these precise words :—'Well, what say the malignants now ? Are they at last convinced that I can paint on the great scale ? Why, if not, then e'en let Michael Angelo come down and do something better. Now at least I have stopped their mouths, and shown the world what I am worth.' I shrugged my shoulders. I and the Signor Rossi changed the subject to one which lasted us till nightfall ; and from this (continues Passeri in his rambling way*) it may be gathered how *gagliardo* he (Salvator) was in his own opinion. Yet it may not be denied but that he had all the endowments of a marvellous great painter ; one of great resources and high perfection ; and had he no other merit, he had at least that of being the originator of his own style. He spoke

Lady Morgan is always quarrelling with Passeri's style, because it is not that of a modern Blue-stockings.

this evening of Paul Veronese more than of any other painter, and praised the Venetian School greatly. To Raffaele he had no great leaning, for it was the fashion of the Neapolitan School to call him hard, *di pietra*, dry," &c.

Our artist's constitution now began to break, worn out perhaps by the efforts of his art, and still more by the irritation of his mind. In a letter dated 1666, he complains,—

"I have suffered two months of agony, even with the abstemious regimen of chicken broth! My feet are two lumps of ice, in spite of the woollen hose I have imported from Venice. I never permit the fire to be quenched in my own room, and am more solicitous than even the Cavalier Cigoli (who died of a cold caught in painting a fresco in the Vatican). There is not a fissure in the house that I am not daily employed in diligently stopping up, and yet with all this I cannot get warm; nor do I think the torch of love, or the caresses of Phryne herself, would kindle me into a glow. For the rest, I can talk of anything but my pencil; my canvas lies turned to the wall; my colours are dried up now and for ever; nor can I give my thoughts to any subject whatever but chimney-corners, brasiers, warming-pans, woollen gloves, woollen caps, and such sort of gear. In short, dear friend, I am perfectly aware that I have lost much of my original ardour, and am absolutely reduced to pass entire days without speaking a word. Those fires, once mine and so brilliant, are now all spent, or evaporating in smoke. Wee unto me, should I ever be reduced to exercise my pencil for bread!"

Yet after this, he at intervals produced some of his best pictures. The scene, however, was now hastening to a close; and the account here given of his last days, though containing nothing perhaps very memorable, will yet, we think, be perused with a melancholy interest.

"A change in his complexion was thought to indicate some derangement of the liver, and he continued in a state

of great languor and depression during the autumn of 1672; but in the winter of 1673 the total loss of appetite, and of all power of digestion, reduced him almost to the last extremity; and he consented, at the earnest request of Lucrezia and his numerous friends, to take more medical advice. He now passed through the hands of various physicians, whose ignorance and technical pedantry come out with characteristic effect in the simple and matter-of-fact details which the good Padre Baldovini has left of the last days of his eminent friend. Various cures were suggested by the Roman faculty for a disease which none had yet ventured to name. Meantime the malady increased, and showed itself in all the life-wearing symptoms of sleeplessness, loss of appetite, intermitting fever, and burning thirst. A French quack was called in to the sufferer; and his prescription was that he should drink water abundantly, and nothing but water. While, however, under the care of this Gallic Sangrado, a confirmed dropsy unequivocally declared itself; and Salvator, now acquainted with the nature of his disease, once more submitted to the intreaties of his friends; and, at the special persuasion of the Padre Francesco Baldovini, placed himself under the care of a celebrated Italian empiric, then in great repute in Rome, called Dr Penna.

“Salvator had but little confidence in medicine. He had already, during this melancholy winter, discarded all his physicians, and literally thrown physic to the dogs. But hope and spring, and love of life, revived together; and towards the latter end of February, he consented to receive the visits of Penna, who had cured Baldovini (on the good father's own word) of a confirmed dropsy the year before. When the doctor was introduced, Salvator, with his wonted manliness, called on him to answer the question he was about to propose with honesty and frankness, viz., Was his disorder curable? Penna, after going through certain professional forms, answered, ‘That his

disorder was a simple, and not a complicated dropsy, and that therefore it was curable.'

"Salvator instantly and cheerfully placed himself in the doctor's hands, and consented to submit to whatever he should subscribe. 'The remedy of Penna,' says Baldovini, 'lay in seven little vials, of which the contents were to be swallowed every day.' But it was obvious to all that, as the seven vials were emptied, the disorder of Rosa increased; and on the seventh day of his attendance, the doctor declared to his friend Baldovini that the malady of his patient was beyond his reach and skill.

"The friends of Salvator now suggested to him their belief that his disease was brought on and kept up by his rigid confinement to the house, so opposed to his former active habits of life; but when they urged him to take air and exercise, he replied significantly to their importunities, 'I take exercise! I go out! if this is your counsel, how are you deceived!' At the earnest request, however, of Penna, he consented to see him once more; but the moment he entered his room, he demanded of him, 'if he now thought that he was curable?' Penna, in some emotion, prefaced his verdict by declaring solemnly 'that he should conceive it no less glory to restore so illustrious a genius to health and to the society he was so calculated to adorn than to save the life of the Sovereign Pontiff himself; but that, as far as his science went, the case was now beyond the reach of human remedy.' While Penna spoke Salvator, who was surrounded by his family and many friends, fixed his penetrating eyes on the physician's face with the intense look of one who sought to read his sentence in the countenance of his judge, ere it was verbally pronounced; but that sentence was now passed; and Salvator, who seemed more struck by surprise than by apprehension, remained silent and in a fixed attitude. His friends, shocked and grieved, or awed by the expression of his countenance, which was marked by a stern and hopeless melancholy, arose and departed

silently one by one. After a long and deep reverie, Rosa suddenly left the room, and shut himself up alone in his study. There in silence and in unbroken solitude he remained for two days, holding no communication with his wife, his son, or his most intimate friends; and when at last their tears and lamentations drew him forth, he was no longer recognisable. Shrunk, feeble, attenuated, almost speechless, he sank on his couch, to rise no more!

"Life was now wearing away with such obvious rapidity, that his friends, both clerical and laical, urged him in the most strenuous manner to submit to the ceremonies and forms prescribed by the Roman Catholic Church in such awful moments. How much the solemn sadness of those moments may be increased, even to terror and despair, by such pompous and lugubrious pageants, all who have visited Italy, all who still visit it, can testify. Salvator demanded what they required of him. They replied, 'in the first instance to receive the sacrament, as it is administered in Rome to the dying.' 'To receiving the sacrament,' says his confessor, Baldovini, 'he showed no repugnance (*non se mostrò repugnante*); but he vehemently and positively refused to allow the host, with all the solemn pomp of its procession, to be brought to his house, which he deemed unworthy of the divine presence.'

"The rejection of a ceremony which was deemed in Rome indispensably necessary to salvation, and by one who was already stamped with the Church's reprobation, soon took air; report exaggerated the circumstance into a positive expression of infidelity; and the gossipry of the Roman ante-rooms was supplied for the time with a subject of discussion, in perfect harmony with their slander, bigotry, and idleness. 'As I went forth from Salvator's door,' relates the worthy Baldovini, 'I met the Canonico Scornio, a man who has taken out a licence to speak of all men as he pleases. "And how goes it with Salvator?" demands of me this Canonico. "Bad enough, I fear."

“Well, a few nights back, happening to be in the ante-room of a certain great prelate, I found myself in the centre of a circle of disputants, who were busily discussing whether the aforesaid Salvator would die a schismatic, a Huguenot, a Calvinist, or a Lutheran?” “He will die, Signor Canonico,” I replied, “when it pleases God, a better Catholic than any of those who now speak so slightly of him.” And so I pursued my way.’

“On the 15th of March Baldovini entered the patient’s chamber. But, to all appearance, Salvator was suffering great agony. ‘How goes it with thee, Rosa?’ asked Baldovini kindly, as he approached him. ‘Bad, bad!’ was the emphatic reply. While writhing with pain, the sufferer, after a moment, added, ‘To judge by what I now endure, the hand of death grasps me sharply.’

“In the restlessness of pain, he now threw himself on the edge of the bed, and placed his head on the bosom of Lucrezia, who sat supporting and weeping over him. His afflicted son and friend took their station at the other side of his couch, and stood watching the issue of these sudden and frightful spasms in mournful silence. At that moment a celebrated Roman physician, the Doctor Catanni, entered the apartment. He felt the pulse of Salvator, and perceived that he was fast sinking. He communicated his approaching dissolution to those most interested in the melancholy intelligence, and it struck all present with unutterable grief. Baldovini, however, true to his sacred calling, even in the depth of his human affliction, instantly despatched the young Agostino to the neighbouring Convent della Trinità for the holy Viaticum. While life was still fluttering at the heart of Salvator, the officiating priest of the day arrived, bearing with him the holy apparatus of the last mysterious ceremony of the Church. The shoulders of Salvator were laid bare, and anointed with the consecrated oil; some prayed fervently, others wept, and all even still hoped; but the taper which the Doctor Catanni held to

the lips of Salvator, while the Viaticum was administered, burned brightly and steadily ! Life's last sign had transpired, as religion performed her last rite."

Salvator left a wife and son (a boy of about thirteen), who inherited a considerable property in books, prints, and bills of exchange, which his father had left in his banker's hands for pictures painted in the last few years of his life.

We confess we close these volumes with something of a melancholy feeling. We have, in this great artist, another instance added to the list of those who, being born to give delight to others, appear to have lived only to torment themselves, and with all the ingredients of happiness placed within their reach, to have derived no benefit either from talents or success. Is it that the outset of such persons in life (who are raised by their own efforts from want and obscurity) jars their feelings and sours their tempers ? or that painters, being often men without education or general knowledge, over-rate their own pretensions, and meet with continual mortifications in the rebuffs they receive from the world, who do not judge by the same individual standard ? Or is a morbid irritability the inseparable concomitant of genius ? None of these suppositions fairly solves the difficulty ; for many of the old painters (and those the greatest) were men of mild manners, of great modesty, and good temper. Painting, however, speaks a language known to few, and of which all pretend to judge ; and may thus, perhaps, afford more occasion to pamper sensibility into a disease, where the seeds of it are sown too deeply in the constitution and not checked by proportionable self-knowledge and reflection. Where an artist of genius, however, is not made the victim of his own impatience, or of idle censures, or of the good fortunes of others, we cannot conceive of a more delightful or enviable life. There is none that implies a greater degree of thoughtful abstraction, or a more entire freedom from angry differences of opinion,

or that leads the mind more out of itself and reposes more calmly on the grand and beautiful, or the most casual object in nature. Salvator died young. He had done enough for fame; and had he been happier, he would perhaps have lived longer. We do not, in one sense, feel the loss of painters so much as that of other eminent men. They may still be said to be present with us bodily in their works: we can revive their memory by every object we see; and it seems as if they could never wholly die, while the ideas and thoughts, that occupied their minds while living, survive, and have a palpable and permanent existence in forms of external nature.

ON HOGARTH'S MARRIAGE A-LA-MODE.

THE superiority of the pictures of Hogarth, which we have seen in the late collection at the British Institution,* to the common prints, is confined chiefly to the *Marriage à-la-Mode*. We shall attempt to illustrate a few of their most striking excellences, more particularly with reference to the expression of character. Their merits are indeed so prominent, and have been so often discussed, that it may be thought difficult to point out any new beauties; but they contain so much truth of nature, they present the objects to the eye under so many aspects and bearings, admit of so many constructions, and are so pregnant with meaning, that the subject is in a manner inexhaustible.

Boccaccio, the most refined and sentimental of all the novel-writers, has been stigmatised as a mere inventor of licentious tales, because readers in general have only seized on those things in his works which were suited to their own taste, and have reflected their own grossness back upon the writer. So it has happened that, the majority of critics having been most struck with the strong and decided expression in Hogarth, the extreme delicacy and subtle gradations of character in his pictures have almost entirely escaped them. In the first picture of the *Marriage à-la-Mode*, the three figures of the young Nobleman, his intended Bride, and her innamorato, the Lawyer, show how much Hogarth excelled in the power of giving soft and effeminate expression. They have, however, been less noticed than the other figures, which tell a plainer story and convey a more palpable moral. Nothing can be more

* They are now in the National Gallery, Nos. 113-118.—*Ed.*

finely managed than the differences of character in these delicate personages. The Beau sits smiling at the looking-glass, with a reflected simper of self-admiration and a languishing inclination of the head, while the rest of his body is perked up on his high heels with a certain air of tip-toe elevation. He is the Narcissus of the reign of George II., whose powdered peruke, ruffles, gold lace, and patches, divide his self-love unequally with his own person—the true *Sir Plume* of his day—

“Of amber-lidded snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane.”

There is the same felicity in the figure and attitude of the Bride, courted by the Lawyer. There is the utmost flexibility and yielding softness in her whole person, a listless languor and tremulous suspense in the expression of her face. It is the precise look and air which Pope has given to his favourite Belinda, just at the moment of the *Rape of the Lock*. The heightened glow, the forward intelligence, and loosened soul of love in the same face, in the assignation scene before the masquerade, form a fine and instructive contrast to the delicacy, timidity, and coy reluctance expressed in the first. The Lawyer in both pictures is much the same—perhaps too much so—though even this unmoved, unaltered appearance may be designed as characteristic. In both cases he has “a person and a smooth dispose, framed to make women false.” He is full of that easy good humour and easy good opinion of himself with which the sex are delighted. There is not a sharp angle in his face to obstruct his success, or give a hint of doubt or difficulty. His whole aspect is round and rosy, lively and unmeaning, happy without the least expense of thought, careless and inviting, and conveys a perfect idea of the uninterrupted glide and pleasing murmur of the soft periods that flow from his tongue.

The expression of the Bride in the Morning scene is the

most highly seasoned, and at the same time the most vulgar, in the series. The figure, face, and attitude of the husband are inimitable. Hogarth has with great skill contrasted the pale countenance of the husband with the yellow whitish colour of the marble chimney-piece behind him, in such a manner as to preserve the fleshy tone of the former. The airy splendour of the view of the inner-room in this picture is probably not exceeded by any of the productions of the Flemish school.

The Young Girl in the third picture, who is represented as the victim of fashionable profligacy, is unquestionably one of the Artist's *chefs-d'œuvre*. The exquisite delicacy of the painting is only surpassed by the felicity and subtlety of the conception. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the extreme softness of her person and the hardened indifference of her character. The vacant stillness, the docility to vice, the premature suppression of youthful sensibility, the doll-like mechanism of the whole figure which seems to have no other feeling but a sickly sense of pain, show the deepest insight into human nature, and into the effects of those refinements in depravity, by which it has been good-naturedly asserted that "vice loses half its evil in losing all its grossness." The story of this picture is in some parts very obscure and enigmatical. It is certain that the Nobleman is not looking straightforward to the Quack, whom he seems to have been threatening with his cane, but that his eyes are turned up with an ironical leer of triumph to the Procuress. The commanding attitude and size of this woman, the swelling circumference of her dress, spread out like a turkey cock's feathers, the fierce, ungovernable, inveterate malignity of her countenance, which hardly needs the comment of the clasp-knife to explain her purpose, are all admirable in themselves, and still more so as they are opposed to the mute insensibility, the elegant negligence of the dress, and the childish figure of the girl, who is supposed to be her

protégé. As for the Quack, there can be no doubt entertained about him. His face seems as if it were composed of salve, and his features exhibit all the chaos and confusion of the most gross, ignorant, and impudent empiricism.

The gradations of ridiculous affectation in the Music scene are finely imagined and preserved. The preposterous, over-trained admiration of the Lady of Quality, the sentimental, insipid, patient delight of the Man, with his hair in paper, and sipping his tea—the pert, smirking, conceited, half-distorted approbation of the figure next to him, the transition to the total insensibility of the round face in profile, and then to the wonder of the Negro boy at the rapture of his Mistress, form a perfect whole. The sanguine complexion and flame-coloured hair of the female Virtuoso throw an additional light on the character. This is lost in the print. The continuing the red colour of the hair into the back of the chair has been pointed out as one of those instances of alliteration in colouring of which these pictures are everywhere full. The gross, bloated appearance of the Italian Singer is well relieved by the hard features of the instrumental performer behind him, which might be carved of wood. The Negro boy holding the chocolate, both in expression, colour, and execution, is a master piece. The gay, lively derision of the other Negro boy, playing with the Actæon, is an ingenious contrast to the profound amazement of the first. Some account has already been given of the two lovers in this picture. It is curious to observe the infinite activity of mind which the artist displays on every occasion. An instance occurs in the present picture. He has so contrived the papers in the hair of the Bride as to make them look almost like a wreath of half-blown flowers, while those which he has placed on the head of the musical Amateur very much resemble a *chapeau-de-frise* of horns, which adorn and fortify the lack-lustre expression and mild resignation of the face beneath.

The Night Scene is inferior to the rest of the series. The attitude of the Husband, who is just killed, is one in which it would be impossible for him to stand or even to fall. It resembles the loose pasteboard figures they make for children. The characters in the last picture, in which the Wife dies, are all masterly. We would particularly refer to the captious, petulant self-sufficiency of the Apothecary, whose face and figure are constructed on exact physiognomical principles, and to the fine example of passive obedience and non-resistance in the Servant, whom he is taking to task, and whose coat of green and yellow livery is as long and melancholy as his face. The disconsolate look, the haggard eyes, the open mouth, the comb sticking in the hair, the broken, gapped teeth which, as it were, hitch in an answer—everything about him denotes the utmost perplexity and dismay. The harmony and gradations of colour in this picture are uniformly preserved with the greatest nicety, and are well worthy the attention of the artist.

It has been observed that Hogarth's pictures are exceedingly unlike any other representations of the same kind of subjects—that they form a class and have a character peculiar to themselves. It may be worth while to consider in what this general distinction consists.

In the first place, they are, in the strictest sense, *Historical* pictures; and if what Fielding says be true, that his novel of *Tom Jones* ought to be regarded as an epic prose-poem, because it contained a regular development of fable, manners, character, and passion, the compositions of Hogarth will, in like manner, be found to have a higher claim to the title of Epic Pictures than many which have of late arrogated that denomination to themselves. When we say that Hogarth treated his subjects historically, we mean that his works represent the manners and humours of mankind in action, and their characters by varied expression. Everything in his pictures has life and motion

in it. Not only does the business of the scene never stand still, but every feature and muscle is put into full play ; the exact feeling of the moment is brought out, and carried to its utmost height, and then instantly seized and stamped on the canvas for ever. The expression is always taken *en passant*, in a state of progress or change, and, as it were, at the salient point. Besides the excellence of each individual face, the reflection of the expression from face to face, the contrast and struggle of particular motives and feelings in the different actors in the scene, as of anger, contempt, laughter, compassion, are conveyed in the happiest and most lively manner. His figures are not like the background on which they are painted : even the pictures on the wall have a peculiar look of their own. Again, with the rapidity, variety, and scope of history, Hogarth's heads have all the reality and correctness of portraits. He gives the extremes of character and expression, but he gives them with perfect truth and accuracy. This is, in fact, what distinguishes his compositions from all others of the same kind, that they are equally remote from caricature and from mere still life. It of course happens in subjects from common life that the painter can procure real models, and he can get them to sit as long as he pleases. Hence, in general, those attitudes and expressions have been chosen which could be assumed the longest, and in imitating which the artist, by taking pains and time, might produce almost as complete fac-similes as he could of a flower or a flower-pot, of a damask curtain or a china vase. The copy was as perfect and as uninteresting in the one case as in the other. On the contrary, subjects of drollery and ridicule affording frequent examples of strange deformity and peculiarity of features, these have been eagerly seized by another class of artists who, without subjecting themselves to the laborious drudgery of the Dutch school and their imitators, have produced our popular caricatures, by rudely copying or

exaggerating the casual irregularities of the human countenance. Hogarth has equally avoided the faults of both these styles, the insipid tameness of the one and the gross vulgarity of the other, so as to give to the productions of his pencil equal solidity and effect. For his faces go to the very verge of caricature, and yet never (we believe in any single instance) go beyond it: they take the very widest latitude, and yet we always see the links which bind them to nature: they bear all the marks and carry all the conviction of reality with them, as if we had seen the actual faces for the first time, from the precision, consistency, and good sense with which the whole and every part is made out. They exhibit the most uncommon features with the most uncommon expressions, but which are yet as familiar and intelligible as possible, because with all the boldness they have all the truth of nature. Hogarth has left behind him as many of these memorable faces in their memorable moments, as perhaps most of us remember in the course of our lives, and has thus doubled the quantity of our observation.

We have already attempted to point out the fund of observation, physical and moral, contained in one set of these pictures, the *Marriage à-la-Mode*. The rest would furnish as many topics to descant upon, were the patience of the reader as inexhaustible as the painter's invention. But, as this is not the case, we shall content ourselves with barely referring to some of those figures in the other pictures, which appear the most striking, and which we see not only while we are looking at them, but which we have before us at all other times. For instance, who having seen can easily forget that exquisite frost-piece of religion and morality, the antiquated Prude in the Morning scene; or that striking commentary on the *good old times*, the little wretched appendage of a Footboy, who crawls half-famished and half-frozen behind her? The French Man and Woman in the Noon are the perfection of flighty

affectation and studied grimace ; the amiable *fraternisation* of the two old Women saluting each other is not enough to be admired ; and in the little Master, in the same national group, we see the early promise and personification of that eternal principle of wondrous self-complacency, proof against all circumstances, which makes the French the only people who are vain even of being cuckolded and being conquered ! Or shall we prefer to this the outrageous distress and unmitigated terrors of the Boy who has dropped his dish of meat, and who seems red all over with shame and vexation, and bursting with the noise he makes ? Or what can be better than the good housewifery of the Girl underneath, who is devouring the lucky fragments, or than the plump, ripe, florid, luscious look of the Servant-wench embraced by a greasy rascal of an Othello, with her pie-dish tottering like her virtue, and with the most precious part of its contents running over ? Just—no, not quite—as good is the joke of the woman over head who, having quarrelled with her husband, is throwing their Sunday’s dinner out of the window, to complete this chapter of accidents of baked-dishes. The husband in the Evening scene is certainly as meek as any recorded in history ; but we cannot say that we admire this picture, or the Night scene after it. But then, in the *Taste in High Life*, there is that inimitable pair, differing only in sex, congratulating and delighting one another by “all the mutually-reflected charities” of folly and affectation, with the young Lady coloured like a rose, dandling her little, black, pug faced, white-teethed, chuckling favourite, and with the portrait of Mons. Des Noyers in the background, dancing in a grand ballet, surrounded by butterflies. And again, in the Election-dinner [Soane Museum 53] is the immortal Collier, surrounded by his Peers who, “frequent and full”—

“*In loud recess and brawling conclave sit :*”

the Jew in the second picture [Soane Museum 56], a very

Jew in grain—innumerable fine sketches of heads in the Polling for Votes [Soane Museum 73], of which the Nobleman overlooking the caricaturist is the best—and then the irresistible tumultuous display of broad humour in the Chairing the Member [Soane Museum 78], which is, perhaps, of all Hogarth's pictures, the most full of laughable incidents and situations—the yellow, rusty-faced Thresher, with his swinging flail, breaking the head of one of the Chairmen, and his redoubted antagonist, the Sailor, with his oak stick and stumping wooden leg, a supplemental cudgel—the persevering ecstasy of the hobbling, blind Fiddler who, in the fray, appears to have been trod upon by the artificial excrescence of the honest Tar—Monsieur, the Monkey, with piteous aspect, speculating the impending disaster of the triumphant candidate, and his brother Bruin appropriating the paunch—the precipitous flight of the Pigs, souse overhead into the water, the fine Lady fainting, with vermilion lips, and the two Chimney-sweepers, satirical young rogues! We had almost forgot the Politician who is burning a hole through his hat with a candle in reading the newspaper; and the Chickens, in the *March to Finchley*, wandering in search of their lost dam, who is found in the pocket of the Serjeant. Of the pictures in the *Rake's Progress*, in this Collection [Soane Museum 1–8], we shall not here say anything, because we think them, on the whole, inferior to the prints, and because they have already been criticised by a writer, to whom we could add nothing, in a paper which ought to be read by every lover of Hogarth and of English genius.*

* An Essay on the Genius of Hogarth, by C. Lamb.

ON THE FINE ARTS.

THE term Fine Arts may be viewed as embracing all those arts in which the powers of imitation or invention are exerted, chiefly with a view to the production of pleasure by the immediate impression which they make on the mind. But the phrase has of late been restricted to a narrower and more technical signification, namely, to painting, sculpture, engraving, and architecture, which appeal to the eye as the medium of pleasure ; and, by way of eminence, to the two first of these arts. In the following observations, I shall adopt this limited sense of the term ; and shall endeavour to develop the principles upon which the great masters have proceeded, and also to inquire in a more particular manner into the state and probable advancement of these arts in this country. The great works of art at present extant, and which may be regarded as models of perfection in their several kinds, are the Greek statues, the pictures of the celebrated Italian masters, those of the Dutch and Flemish schools, to which we may add the comic productions of our own countryman Hogarth. These all stand unrivalled in the history of art ; and they owe their pre-eminence and perfection to one and the same principle—*the immediate imitation of nature*. This principle predominated equally in the classical forms of the antique and in the grotesque figures of Hogarth ; the perfection of art in each arose from the truth and identity of the imitation with the reality ; the difference was in the subjects—there was none in the mode of imitation. Yet the advocates for the *ideal system of art* would persuade their disciples that the difference between Hogarth

and the antique does not consist in the different forms of nature which they imitated, but in this, that the one is like, and the other unlike, nature. This is an error, the most detrimental, perhaps, of all others, both to the theory and practice of art. As, however, the prejudice is very strong and general, and supported by the highest authority, it will be necessary to go somewhat elaborately into the question, in order to produce an impression on the other side.

What has given rise to the common notion of the *ideal*, as something quite distinct from *actual* nature, is probably the perfection of the Greek statues. Not seeing among ourselves anything to correspond in beauty and grandeur, either with the feature or form of the limbs in these exquisite remains of antiquity, it was an obvious, but a superficial conclusion that they must have been created from the idea existing in the artist's mind, and could not have been copied from anything existing in nature. The contrary, however, is the fact. The general form both of the face and figure, which we observe in the old statues, is not an ideal abstraction, is not a fanciful invention of the sculptor, but is as completely local and national (though it happens to be more beautiful) as the figures on a Chinese screen, or a copper-plate engraving of a negro chieftain in a book of travels. It will not be denied that there is a difference of physiognomy as well as of complexion in different races of men. The Greek form appears to have been naturally beautiful, and they had, besides, every advantage of climate, of dress, of exercise, and of modes of life to improve it. The artist had also every facility afforded him in the study and knowledge of the human form; and their religious and public institutions gave him every encouragement in the prosecution of his art. All these causes contributed to the perfection of these noble productions; but I should be inclined principally to attribute the superior symmetry of form common to the

Greek statues, in the first place, to the superior symmetry of the models in nature, and in the second, to the more constant opportunities for studying them. If we allow also for the superior genius of the people, we shall not be wrong; but this superiority consisted in their peculiar susceptibility to the impressions of what is beautiful and grand in nature. It may be thought an objection to what has just been said, that the antique figures of animals, &c., are as fine, and proceed on the same principles, as their statues of gods or men. But all that follows from this seems to be that their art had been perfected in the study of the human form—the test and proof of power and skill—and was then transferred easily to the general imitation of all other objects, according to their true characters, proportions, and appearances. As a confirmation of these remarks, the antique portraits of individuals were often superior even to the personification of their gods. I think that no unprejudiced spectator of real taste can hesitate for a moment in preferring the head of the Antinous, for example, to that of the Apollo. And in general it may be laid down as a rule that the most perfect of the antiques are the most simple—those which affect the least action or violence of passion—which repose the most on natural beauty of form and a certain expression of sweetness and dignity, that is, which remain most nearly in that state in which they could be copied from nature without straining the limbs or features of the individual, or racking the invention of the artist. This tendency of Greek art to repose has indeed been reproached with insipidity by those who had not a true feeling of beauty and sentiment. I, however, prefer these models of habitual grace or internal grandeur to the violent distortions of suffering in the Laocoon, or even to the supercilious air of the Apollo. The Niobe, more than any other antique head, combines truth and beauty with deep passion. But here the passion is fixed, intense, habitual—it is not a sudden

or violent gesticulation, but a settled mould of features ; the grief it expresses is such as might almost turn the human countenance itself *into marble* !

In general, then, I would be understood to maintain that the beauty and grandeur so much admired in the Greek statues were not a voluntary fiction of the brain of the artist, but existed substantially in the forms from which they were copied, and by which the artist was surrounded. A striking authority in support of these observations, which has in some measure been lately discovered, is to be found in the *Elgin Marbles*, taken from the Acropolis at Athens, and supposed to be the works of the celebrated Phidias. The process of fastidious refinement and indefinite abstraction is certainly not visible there. The figures have all the ease, simplicity, and variety of individual nature. Even the details of the subordinate parts, the loose hanging folds in the skin, the veins under the belly or on the sides of the horses, more or less swelled, as the animal is more or less in action, are given with scrupulous exactness. This is true nature and true art. In a word, these invaluable remains of antiquity are precisely like casts taken from life. The *ideal* is not the preference of that which exists only in the mind to that which exists in nature, but the preference of that which is fine in nature to that which is less so. There is nothing fine in art but what is taken almost immediately, and as it were, in the mass, from what is finer in nature. Where there have been the finest models in nature, there have been the finest works of art.

As the Greek statues were copied from Greek forms, so Raffaelle's expressions were taken from Italian faces, and I have heard it remarked that the women in the streets of Rome seem to have walked out of his pictures in the Vatican.

Sir Joshua Reynolds constantly refers to Raffaelle as the highest example in modern times (at least with one exception) of the grand or ideal style ; and yet he makes

the essence of that style to consist in the embodying of an abstract or general idea, formed in the mind of the artist by rejecting the peculiarities of individuals, and retaining only what is common to the species. Nothing can be more inconsistent than the style of Raffaele with this definition. In his Cartoons and in his groups in the Vatican there is hardly a face or figure which is anything more than fine individual nature finely disposed and copied. The late Mr Barry, who could not be suspected of prejudice on this side of the question, speaks thus of them: "In Raffaele's pictures (at the Vatican) of the *Dispute of the Sacrament* and the *School of Athens*, one sees all the heads to be entirely copied from particular characters in nature, nearly proper for the persons and situations which he adapts them to; and he seems to me only to add and take away what may answer his purpose in little parts, features, &c.; conceiving, while he had the head before him, ideal characters and expressions, which he adapts their features and peculiarities of face to. This attention to the particulars which distinguish all the different faces, persons and characters, the one from the other, gives his pictures quite the verity and unaffected dignity of nature which stamp the distinguishing differences betwixt one man's face and body and another's."

If anything is wanting to the conclusiveness of this testimony, it is only to look at the pictures themselves; particularly the *Miracle of the Conversion* and the *Assembly of Saints*, which are little else than a collection of divine portraits, in natural and expressive attitudes, full of the loftiest thought and feeling, and as varied as they are fine. It is this reliance on the power of nature which has produced these masterpieces by the Prince of Painters, in which expression is all in all; where one spirit—that of truth—pervades every part, brings down heaven to earth, mingles Cardinals and Popes with angels and apostles, and yet blends and harmonises the whole by the true touches

and intense feeling of what is beautiful and grand in nature. It is no wonder that Sir Joshua, when he first saw Raffaele's pictures in the Vatican, was at a loss to discover any great excellence in them, if he was looking out for his theory of the *ideal*—of neutral character and middle forms.

There is more an appearance of abstract grandeur of form in Michael Angelo. He has followed up, has enforced and expanded, as it were, a preconceived idea, till he sometimes seems to tread on the verge of caricature. His forms, however, are not *middle* but *extreme* forms, massy, gigantic, supernatural. They convey the idea of the greatest size in the figure, and in all the parts of the figure. Every muscle is swollen and turgid. This tendency to exaggeration would have been avoided, if Michael Angelo had recurred more constantly to nature, and had proceeded less on a scientific knowledge of the structure of the human body; for science gives only the positive form of the different parts, which the imagination may afterwards magnify as it pleases, but it is nature alone which combines them with perfect truth and delicacy, in all the varieties of motion and expression. It is fortunate that I can refer, in illustration of my doctrine, to the admirable fragment of the Theseus at Lord Elgin's, which shows the possibility of uniting the grand and natural style in the highest degree. The form of the limbs as affected by pressure or action, and the general sway of the body, are preserved with the most consummate mastery. I should prefer this statue, as a model for forming the style of the student, to the Apollo, which strikes me as having something of a theatrical appearance; or to the Hercules, in which there is an ostentatious and over-laden display of anatomy. This last figure, indeed, is so overloaded with sinews, that it has been suggested as a doubt whether, if life could be put into it, it would be able to move. Grandeur of conception, truth of nature, and purity of taste

seem to have been at their height when the masterpieces which adorned the Temple of Minerva at Athens, of which we have only these imperfect fragments, were produced. Compared with these, the later Greek statues display a more elaborate workmanship, more of the artifices of style. The several parts are more uniformly balanced, made more to tally like modern periods; each muscle is more equally brought out, and more highly finished as a part, but not with the same subordination of each part to the whole. If some of these wonderful productions have a fault, it is the want of that entire and naked simplicity which pervades the whole of the *Elgin Marbles*.

Having spoken here of the Greek statues, and of the works of Raffaele and Michael Angelo, as far as relates to the imitation of nature, I shall attempt to point out, to the best of my ability and as concisely as possible, what I conceive to be their general and characteristic excellences. The ancients excelled in beauty of form, Michael Angelo in grandeur of conception, Raffaele in expression. In Raffaele's faces, particularly his women, the expression is very superior to the form; in the ancient statues the form is the principal thing. The interest which the latter excite is in a manner external; it depends on a certain grace and lightness of appearance, joined with exquisite symmetry and refined susceptibility to voluptuous emotions; but there is in general a want of pathos. In their looks we do not read the wishings of the heart; by their beauty they are deluded. The pathos which they exhibit is rather that of present and physical distress than of deep internal sentiment. What has been remarked of Leonardo da Vinci is also true of Raffaele, that there is an angelic sweetness and tenderness in his faces, in which human frailty and passion are purified by the sanctity of religion. The ancient statues are finer objects for the eye to contemplate; they represent a more perfect race of physical beings; but we have little sympathy with them. In Raffaele all our

natural sensibilities are heightened and refined by the sentiments of faith and hope, pointing mysteriously to the interests of another world. The same intensity of passion appears also to distinguish Raffaele from Michael Angelo. Michael Angelo's forms are grander, but they are not so informed with expression. Raffaele's, however ordinary in themselves, are full of expression, "even to o'erflowing;" every nerve and muscle is impregnated with feeling—bursting with meaning. In Michael Angelo, on the contrary, the powers of body and mind appear superior to any events that can happen to them; the capacity of thought and feeling is never full, never strained, or tasked to the full extremity of what it will bear. All is in a lofty repose or solitary grandeur, which no human interest can shake or disturb. It has been said that Michael Angelo painted *man*, and Raffaele *men*; that the one was an epic, the other a dramatic painter. But the distinction I have stated is, perhaps, truer and more intelligible, viz., that the one gave greater dignity of form, and the other greater force and refinement of expression. Michael Angelo, in fact, borrowed his style from sculpture. He represented in general only single figures (with subordinate accompaniments), and had not to express the conflicting actions and passions of a multitude of persons. It is, therefore, a mere truism to say that his compositions are not dramatic. He is much more picturesque than Raffaele. His drawing of the human form has the characteristic freedom and boldness of Titian's landscapes.

After Michael Angelo and Raffaele, there is no doubt that Leonardo da Vinci and Correggio are the two painters in modern times, who have carried historical expression to the highest ideal perfection; and yet it is equally certain that their heads are carefully copied from faces and expressions in nature. Leonardo excelled principally in his women and children. There is, in his female heads, a peculiar charm of expression, a character of natural sweet-

ness and tender playfulness, mixed up with the pride of conscious intellect and the graceful reserve of personal dignity. He blends purity with voluptuousness ; and the expression of his women is equally characteristic of "the mistress or the saint." His pictures are worked up to the height of the idea he had conceived, with an elaborate felicity ; but this idea was evidently first suggested by, and afterwards religiously compared with, nature. This was his excellence. His fault is that his style of execution is too mathematical ; that is, his pencil does not follow the graceful variety of the details of objects, but substitutes certain refined gradations, both of form and colour, producing equal changes in equal distances, with a mechanical uniformity. Leonardo was a man of profound learning as well as genius, and perhaps transferred too much of the formality of science to his favourite art.

The masterpieces of Correggio have the same identity with nature, the same stamp of truth. He has, indeed, given to his pictures the utmost softness and refinement of outline and expression ; but this idea, at which he constantly aimed, is filled up with all the details and varieties which such heads would have in nature. So far from anything like a naked, abstract idea, or middle form, the individuality of his faces has something peculiar in it, even approaching the grotesque. He has endeavoured to impress habitually on the countenance those undulating outlines which rapture or tenderness leave there, and has chosen for this purpose those forms and proportions which most obviously assisted his design.

As to the colouring of Correggio, it is nature itself. Not only is the general tone perfectly true, but every speck and particle is varied in colour, in relief, in texture, with a care, a felicity, and an effect which are almost magical. His light and shade are equally admirable. No one else perhaps, ever gave the same harmony and roundness to his compositions. So true are his shadows, equally free

from coldness, opacity, or false glare—so clear, so broken, so airy, and yet so deep, that if you hold your hand so as to cast a shadow on any part of the flesh which is in the light, this part, so shaded, will present exactly the same appearance which the painter has given to the shadowed part of the picture. Correggio, indeed, possessed a greater variety of excellences in the different departments of his art than any other painter; and yet it is remarkable that the impression which his pictures leave upon the mind of the common spectator is monotonous and comparatively feeble. His style is in some degree mannered and confined. For instance, he is without the force, passion, and grandeur of Raffaele, who, however, possessed his softness of expression, but of expression only; and in colour, in light and shade, and other qualities, was quite inferior to Correggio. We may, perhaps, solve this apparent contradiction by saying that he applied the power of his mind to a greater variety of objects than others; but that this power was still of the same character, consisting in a certain exquisite sense of the harmonious, the soft and graceful in form, colour and sentiment, but with a deficiency of strength and a tendency to effeminacy in all these.

After the names of Raffaele and Correggio I shall mention that of Guido, whose female faces are exceedingly beautiful and ideal, but altogether commonplace and vapid compared with those of Raffaele or Correggio; and they are so for no other reason but that the general idea they convey is not enriched and strengthened by an intense contemplation of nature. For the same reason I can conceive nothing more unlike the antique than the figures of Poussin, except as to the preservation of the costume; and it is perhaps chiefly owing to the habit of studying his art at second-hand, or by means of scientific rules, that the great merits of that able painter, whose understanding and genius are unquestionable, are confined to his choice of

subjects for his pictures, and his manner of telling the story. His landscapes, which he probably took from nature, are superior as paintings to his historical pieces. The faces of Poussin want natural expression, as his figures want grace; but the backgrounds of his historical compositions can scarcely be surpassed. In his *Plague of Athens*, the very buildings seem stiff with horror. His giants, seated on the top of their fabled mountains, and playing on their panpipes, are as familiar and natural as if they were the ordinary inhabitants of the scene. The finest of his landscapes is his picture of the *Deluge*. The sun is just seen, wan and drooping in his course. The sky is bowed down with a weight of waters, and heaven and earth seem mingling together.

Titian is at the head of the Venetian school; he is the first of all colourists. In delicacy and purity Correggio is equal to him, but his colouring has not the same warmth and gusto in it. Titian's flesh-colour partakes of the glowing nature of the climate, and of the luxuriousness of the manners of his country. He represents objects not through a merely lucid medium, but as if tinged with a golden light. Yet it is wonderful in how low a tone of local colouring his pictures are painted—how rigidly his means are husbanded. His most gorgeous effects are produced not less by keeping down than by heightening his colours; the fineness of his gradations adds to their variety and force; and with him truth is the same thing as splendour. Everything is done by the severity of his eye, by the patience of his touch. He is enabled to keep pace with nature by never hurrying on before her; and as he forms the broadest masses out of innumerable varying parts and minute touches of the pencil, so he unites and harmonises the strongest contrasts by the most imperceptible transitions. Every distinction is relieved and broken by some other intermediate distinction, like half notes in music; and yet all this accumulation of endless variety is

so managed as only to produce the majestic simplicity of nature, so that to a common eye there is nothing extraordinary in his pictures, any more than in nature itself. It is, I believe, owing to what has been here stated, that Titian is, of all painters, at once the easiest and the most difficult to copy. He is the most difficult to copy perfectly, for the artifice of his colouring and execution is hid in its apparent simplicity ; and yet the knowledge of nature and the arrangement of the forms and masses in his pictures are so masterly that any copy made from them, even the rudest outline or sketch, can hardly fail to have a look of high art. Because he was the greatest colourist in the world, this, which was his most prominent, has, for shortness, been considered as his only, excellence ; and he has been said to have been ignorant of drawing. What he was, generally speaking, deficient in, was invention or composition, though even this appears to have been more from habit than want of power ; but his drawing of actual forms, where they were not to be put into momentary action, or adapted to a particular expression, was as fine as possible. His drawing of the forms of inanimate objects is unrivalled. His trees have a marked character and physiognomy of their own, and exhibit an appearance of strength or flexibility, solidity or lightness, as if they were endued with conscious power and purposes. Character was another excellence which Titian possessed in the highest degree. It is scarcely speaking too highly of his portraits to say that they have as much expression, that is, convey as fine an idea of intellect and feeling, as the historical heads of Raffaele. The chief difference appears to be that the expression in Raffaele is more imaginary and contemplative, and in Titian more personal and constitutional. The heads of the one seem thinking more of some event or subject, those of the other to be thinking more of themselves. In the portraits of Titian, as might be expected, the Italian character always predominates : there is a look

of piercing sagacity, of commanding intellect, of acute sensibility, which it would be in vain to seek for in any other portraits. The daring spirit and irritable passions of the age and country are distinctly stamped upon their countenances, and can be as little mistaken as the costume which they wear. The portraits of Raffaele, though full of profound thought and feeling, have more of common humanity about them. Titian's portraits are the most historical that ever were painted; and they are so for this reason, that they have most consistency of form and expression. His portraits of *Hippolita de Medici* and of a *Young Neapolitan Nobleman*, lately in the gallery of the Louvre, are a striking contrast in this respect. All the lines of the face in the one, the eye-brows, the nose, the corners of the mouth, the contour of the face, present the same sharp angles, the same acute, edgy, contracted, violent expression. The other portrait has the finest expansion of feature and outline, and conveys the most exquisite idea of mild, thoughtful sentiment. The consistency of the expression constitutes as great a charm in Titian's portraits as the harmony of the colouring. The similarity sometimes objected to in his heads is partly national, and partly arises from the class of persons whom he painted. He painted only Italians; and in his time it rarely happened that any but persons of the highest rank, senators or cardinals, sat for their pictures. The similarity of costume, of the dress, the beard, &c., also adds to the similarity of their appearance. It adds, at the same time, to their picturesque effect; and the alteration in this respect is one circumstance among others, that has been injurious, not to say fatal, to modern art. This observation is not confined to portraits; for the hired dresses with which our historical painters clothe their figures, sit no more easily on the imagination of the artist than they do gracefully on the lay-figures, over which they are thrown.

Giorgione, Paul Veronese, Tintoret, and the Bassani are the remaining great names of the Venetian school. The excellence of all these consisted in their bold, masterly, and striking imitation of nature. Their want of *ideal form* and elevated character is indeed a constant subject of reproach against them. Giorgione takes the first place among them; for he was in some measure the master of Titian; whereas the others were only his disciples. The Caracci, Domenichino, and the rest of the Bolognese school formed themselves on a principle of combining the excellences of the Roman and Venetian painters, in which they for a while succeeded to a considerable degree; but they degenerated and dwindled away into absolute insignificance, in proportion as they departed from nature or the great masters who had copied her, to mould their works on academic rules and the phantoms of abstract perfection.

Rubens is the prince of the Flemish painters. Of all the great painters he is perhaps the most artificial: the man who painted most from his imagination, and, what was almost the inevitable consequence, the most of a mannerist. He had neither the Greek form to study from, nor the Roman expression, nor the high character, picturesque costume and sun-burnt hues which the Venetian painters had immediately before them. He took, however, what circumstances presented to him, a fresher and more blooming tone of complexion, arising from moister air and a colder climate. To this he added the congenial splendour of reflected lights and shadows, cast from rich drapery; and he made what amends he could for the want of expression by the richness of his compositions and the fantastic variety of his allegorical groups. Both his colouring and his drawing were, however, ideal exaggerations; but both had particular qualities of the highest virtue. He has given to his flesh greater transparency and freshness than any other painter; and this excellence he had

from nature. One of the finest instances will be found in his *Peasant Family going to Market*, in which the figures have all the bloom of health upon their countenances; and the very air of the surrounding landscape strikes sharp and wholesome on the sense. Rubens had another excellence: he has given all that relates to the expression of motion in his allegorical figures, in his children, his animals, even in his trees, to a degree which no one else has equalled, or indeed approached. His drawing is often deficient in proportion, in knowledge, and in elegance, but it is always picturesque. The drawing of N. Poussin, on the contrary, which has been much cried up, is merely learned and anatomical: he has a knowledge of the structure and measurements of the human body, but very little feeling of the grand, or beautiful, or striking, in form.

All Rubens' forms have ease, freedom, and excessive elasticity. In the grotesque style of history, as in groups of satyrs, nymphs, bacchanals, and animals, where striking contrasts of form are combined with every kind of rapid and irregular movement, he has not a rival. Witness his *Silenus* at Blenheim, where the lines seem drunk and staggering; and his *Procession of Cupids riding on Animals* at Whitehall, with that adventurous leader of the infantine crew, who, with a spear, is urging a lion, on which he is mounted, over the edge of the world; for beyond we only see a precipice of clouds and sky. Rubens' power of expressing motion, perhaps, arose from the facility of his pencil and his habitually trusting a good deal to memory and imagination in his compositions; for this quality can be given in no other way. His portraits are the least valuable productions of his pencil. His landscapes are often delightful, and appear like the work of fairy hands.

It remains to speak of Vandyck and Rembrandt; the one, the disciple of Rubens; the other, the entire founder of his own school. It is not possible for two painters to be more opposite. The characteristic merits of the former

are very happily summed up in a single line of a poetical critic, where he speaks of

“The soft precision of the clear Vandyck.”

The general object of this analysis of the works of the great masters has been to show that their pre-eminence has constantly depended, not on the creation of a fantastic, abstract excellence, existing nowhere but in their own mind, but in their selecting and embodying some one view of nature, which came immediately under their habitual observation, and which their particular genius led them to study and imitate with success. This is certainly the case with Vandyck. His portraits, mostly of English women, in the Louvre, have a cool, refreshing air about them, a look of simplicity and modesty even in the very tone, which forms a fine contrast to the voluptuous glow and mellow, golden lustre of Titian's Italian women. There is a quality of flesh-colour in Vandyck, which is to be found in no other painter, and which exactly conveys the idea of the soft, smooth, sliding, continuous, delicately-varied surface of the skin. The objects in his pictures have the least possible difference of light and shade, and are presented to the eye without passing through any indirect medium. It is this extreme purity and silvery clearness of tone, together with the facility and precision of his particular forms, and a certain air of fashionable elegance characteristic of the age in which he flourished, that places Vandyck in the first rank of portrait painters.

If ever there was a man of genius in the art, it was Rembrandt. He might be said to have created a medium of his own, through which he saw all objects. He was the grossest and the least vulgar, that is to say, the least commonplace in his grossness, of all men. He was the most downright, the least fastidious of the imitators of nature. He took any object, he cared not what, how mean soever in form, colour, and expression; and from

the light and shade which he threw upon it, it came out gorgeous from his hands. As Vandyck made use of the smallest contrasts of light and shade, and painted as if in the open air, Rembrandt used the most violent and abrupt contrasts in this respect, and painted his objects as if in a dungeon. His pictures may be said to be "bright with excessive darkness." His vision had acquired a lynx-eyed sharpness from the artificial obscurity to which he had accustomed himself. "Mystery and silence hung upon his pencil." Yet he could pass rapidly from one extreme to another, and dip his colours with equal success in the gloom of night or in the blaze of the noon-day sun. In surrounding different objects with a medium of imagination, solemn or dazzling, he was a true poet; in all the rest he was a mere painter, but a painter of no common stamp. The powers of his hand were equal to those of his eye; and, indeed, he could not have attempted the subjects he did without an execution as masterly as his knowledge was profound. His colours are sometimes dropped in lumps on the canvas; at other times they are laid on as smooth as glass; and he not unfrequently painted with the handle of his brush. He had an eye for all objects as far as he had seen them. His history and landscapes are equally fine in their way. His landscapes one could look at for ever, though there is nothing in them. But "they are of the earth, earthy." It seems as if he had dug them out of nature. Everything is so true, so real, so full of all the feelings and associations which the eye can suggest to the other senses, that we immediately take as strong an affection to them as if they were our home—the very place where we were brought up. No length of time could add to the intensity of the impressions they convey. Rembrandt is the least classical and the most romantic of all painters. His *Jacob's Ladder* is more like a dream than any other picture that ever was painted. The figure of Jacob himself is thrown in

one corner of the picture like a bundle of clothes, while the angels hover above the darkness in the shape of airy wings.

It would be needless to prove that the generality of the Dutch painters copied from actual objects. They have become almost a bye-word for carrying this principle into its abuse, by copying everything they saw, and having no choice or preference of one thing to another unless that they preferred that which was most obvious and common. I forgive them. They, perhaps, did better in faithfully and skilfully imitating what they had seen than in imagining what they had not seen. Their pictures, at least, show that there is nothing in nature, however mean or trivial, that has not its beauty, and some interest belonging to it, if truly represented. I prefer Vangoyen's views on the borders of a canal, the yellow-tufted bank and passing sail, or Ruysdael's woods and sparkling waterfalls, to the most classical or epic compositions which could have been invented out of nothing; and I think that Teniers's boors, old women, and children are very superior to the little carved ivory Venuses in the pictures of Vanderneer; just as I think Hogarth's *Marriage à-la-Mode* is better than his *Sigismunda*, or as Mr Wilkie's *Card-Players* is better than his *Alfred*. I should not assuredly prefer a *Dutch Fair* by Teniers to a *Cartoon* by Raffaele; but I suspect I should prefer a *Dutch Fair* by Teniers to a *Cartoon* by the same master; or I should prefer truth and nature in the simplest dress to affectation and inanity in the most pompous disguise. Whatever is genuine in art must proceed from the impulse of nature and individual genius.

In the French school there are but two names of high and established reputation—N. Poussin and Claude Lorraine. Of the former I have already spoken; of the latter I shall give my opinion when I come to speak of our own Wilson. I ought not to pass over the names of Murillo and Velasquez, those admirable Spanish painters. It is

difficult to characterise their peculiar excellences as distinct from those of the Italian and Dutch schools. They may be said to hold a middle rank between the painters of mind and body. They express not so much thought and sentiment, nor yet the mere exterior, as the life and spirit of the man. Murillo is probably at the head of that class of painters who have treated subjects of common life. After making the colours on the canvas feel and think, the next best thing is to make them breathe and live. But there is in Murillo's pictures of this kind a look of real life, a cordial flow of native, animal spirits, which we find nowhere else. I might here refer particularly to his picture of the *Two Spanish Beggar Boys*, in the collection at Dulwich College, which cannot easily be forgotten by those who have ever seen it.

I come now to treat of the progress of art in Britain.

I shall first speak of Hogarth, both as he is the first name in the order of time that we have to boast of, and as he is the greatest comic painter of any age or country. His pictures are not imitations of still life, or mere transcripts of incidental scenes or customs, but powerful moral satires, exposing vice and folly in their most ludicrous points of view, and, with a profound insight into the weak sides of character and manners, in all their tendencies, combinations, and contrasts. There is not a single picture of his containing a representation of merely natural or domestic scenery. His object is not so much "to hold the mirror up to nature" as "to show vice her own feature, scorn her own image." Folly is there seen at the height—the moon is at the full—it is the very error of the time. There is a perpetual collision of eccentricities, a tilt and tournament of absurdities, pampered into all sorts of affectation, airy, extravagant, ostentatious! Yet he is as little a caricaturist as he is a painter of still life. Criticism has not done him justice, though public opinion has. His works have received a sanction, which it would be vain to

dispute, in the universal delight and admiration with which they have been regarded from their first appearance to the present moment. If the quantity of amusement or of matter for reflection, which they have afforded is that by which we are to judge of precedence among the intellectual benefactors of mankind, there are perhaps few persons who can put in a stronger claim to our gratitude than Hogarth. The wonderful knowledge which he possessed of human life and manners is only to be surpassed (if it can be) by the powers of invention with which he has arranged his materials, and by the mastery of execution with which he has embodied and made tangible the very thoughts and passing movements of the mind. Some persons object to the style of Hogarth's pictures, or to the class to which they belong. First, Hogarth belongs to no class, or, if he belongs to any, it is to the same class as Fielding, Smollett, Vanbrugh, and Molière. Besides, the merit of his pictures does not depend on the nature of his subjects, but on the knowledge displayed of them, the number of ideas, and the fund of observation and amusement contained in them. Make what deductions you please for the vulgarity of the subjects—yet in the research, the profundity, the absolute truth and precision of the delineation of character—in the invention of incident, in wit and humour, in life and motion, in everlasting variety and originality—they never have been, and probably never will be, surpassed. They stimulate the faculties as well as amuse them. "Other pictures we see, Hogarth's we read!"*

There is one error which has been frequently entertained on this subject, and which I wish to correct, namely, that Hogarth's genius was confined to the imitation of the coarse humour and broad farce of the lowest life. But he excelled quite as much in exhibiting the vices, the folly,

* See the admirable *Essay on the Genius of Hogarth*, by Charles Lamb.

and frivolity of the fashionable manners of his time. His fine ladies do not yield the palm of ridicule to his waiting-maids, and his lords and his porters are on a very respectable footing of equality. He is quite at home either in St Giles's or St James's. There is no want, for example, in his *Marriage à-la-Mode* or his *Taste in High Life* of affectation verging into idiotey, or of languid sensibility that might

“Die of a rose in aromatic pain.”

Many of Hogarth's characters would form admirable illustrations of the “Satires” of Pope, *who* was contemporary with him. In short, Hogarth was a painter of real, not of low, life. He was, as we have said, a satirist, and consequently his pencil did not dwell on the grand and beautiful, but it glanced with equal success at the absurdities and peculiarities of high or low life, “of the great vulgar and the small.”

To this it must be added that he was as great a master of passion as of humour. He succeeded in low tragedy as much as in low or genteel comedy, and had an absolute power in moving the affections and rending the hearts of the spectators, by depicting the effects of the most dreadful calamities of human life on common minds and common countenances. Of this the *Rake's Progress*, particularly the Bedlam scene, and many others, are unanswerable proofs. Hogarth's merits as a mere artist are not confined to his prints. In general, indeed, this is the case. But when he chose to take pains, he could add the delicacies of execution and colouring in the highest degree to those of character and composition, as is evident in his series of pictures, all equally well painted, of the *Marriage à-la-Mode*.

I shall next speak of Wilson, whose landscapes may be divided into three classes: his Italian landscapes, or imitations of the manner of Claude—his copies of English

scenery—and his historical compositions. The first of these are, in my opinion, by much the best; and I appeal in support of this opinion to the *Apollo and the Seasons*, and to the *Phaeton*. The figures are of course out of the question (these being as uncouth and slovenly as Claude's are insipid and finical); but the landscape in both pictures is delightful. In looking at them we breathe the air which the scene inspires, and feel the genius of the place present to us. In the first, there is the cool freshness of a misty spring morning—the sky, the water, the dim horizon, all convey the same feeling. The fine gray tone and varying outline of the hills; the graceful form of the retiring lake, broken still more by the hazy shadows of the objects that repose on its bosom; the light trees that expand their branches in the air, and the dark stone figure and mouldering temple, that contrast strongly with the broad clear light of the rising day,—give a charm, a truth, a force, and harmony to this composition, which produce the greater pleasure the longer it is dwelt on. The distribution of light and shade resembles the effect of light on a globe. The *Phaeton* has the dazzling fervid appearance of an autumnal evening; the golden radiance streams in solid masses from behind the flickering clouds; every object is baked in the sun; the brown foreground, the thick foliage of the trees, the streams, shrunk and stealing along behind the dark, high banks, combine to produce that richness and characteristic unity of effect which are to be found only in nature or in art derived from the study and imitation of nature. The glowing splendour of this landscape reminds us of the saying of Wilson, that in painting such subjects he endeavoured to give the effect of insects dancing in the evening sun. His eye seemed formed to drink in the light. These two pictures, as they have the greatest general effect, are more carefully finished in the particular details than the other pictures in the collection. This circumstance may be worth the attention of those

who are apt to think that strength and slovenliness are the same thing.

Cicero at his Villa is a clear and beautiful representation of nature. The sky is admirable for its pure azure tone. Among the less finished productions of Wilson's pencil, which display his great knowledge of perspective, is *A Landscape with Figures bathing*, in which the figures are wonderfully detached from the sea beyond ; and a *View in Italy*, with a lake and a little boat, which appear at an immeasurable distance below ; the boat diminished to

“ A buoy almost too small for sight.”

A View of Ancona ; *Adrian's Villa at Rome*, a small, blue, greenish landscape ; *The Lake of Neuni*, a small, richly-coloured landscape of the banks of a river ; and a landscape containing some light and elegant groups of trees, are masterly and interesting sketches. *A View on the Tiber*, near Rome ; a dark landscape which lies finely open to the sky ; and *A View of Rome*, are successful imitations of N. Poussin. *A View of Sion House*, which is hung almost out of sight, is remarkable for the clearness of the perspective, particularly in the distant windings of the River Thames, and still more so for the parched and droughty appearance of the whole scene. The air is adust, the grass burned up and withered ; and it seems as if some figures, reposing on the level, smooth-shaven lawn on the river's side, would be annoyed by the parching heat of the ground. We consider this landscape, which is an old favourite, as one of the most striking proofs of Wilson's genius, as it conveys not only the image but the feeling of nature, and excites a new interest unborrowed from the eye, like the fine glow of a summer's day. There is a sketch of the same subject, called *A View on the Thames*. *A View near Llangollen, North Wales* ; *Oakhampton Castle, Devonshire* ; and *The Bridge at Llangollen*, are the principal of Wilson's English landscapes.

In general this artist's views of home scenery want almost everything that ought to recommend them. The subjects he has chosen are not well fitted for the landscape painter, and there is nothing in the execution to redeem them. Ill-shaped mountains, or great heaps of earth—trees that grow against them without character or elegance—motionless waterfalls—a want of relief, of transparency and distance, without the imposing grandeur of real magnitude (which it is scarcely within the province of art to give)—are the chief features and defects of this class of his pictures.

The same general objections apply to *Solitude* and to one or two other pictures near it, which are masses of commonplace confusion. In more confined scenes the effect must depend almost entirely in the differences in the execution and the details; for the difference of colour alone is not sufficient to give relief to objects placed at a small distance from the eye. But in *Wilson* there are commonly no details—all is loose and general; and this very circumstance, which might assist him in giving the mighty contrasts of light and shade, deprived his pencil of all force and precision within a limited space. In general, air is necessary to the landscape painter; and for this reason the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland afford few subjects for landscape painting. However stupendous the scenery of that part of the country is, and however powerful and lasting the impression which it must always make on the imagination, yet the effect is not produced merely through the medium of the eye, but arises chiefly from collateral and associated feelings. There is the knowledge of the physical magnitude of the objects in the midst of which we are placed—the slow, improgressive motion which we make in traversing them—there is the abrupt precipice, the torrent's roar, the boundless expanse of the prospect from the highest mountains—the difficulty of their ascent, their loneliness and silence; in short, there is a constant

sense and superstitious awe of the collective power of matter, on which, from the beginning of time, the hand of man has made no impression, and which, by the lofty reflections they excite in us, give a sort of intellectual sublimity even to our sense of physical weakness. But there is little in all these circumstances that can be translated into the *picturesque*, which makes its appeal immediately to the eye. In a picture, a mountain shrinks to a mole-hill, and the lake that expands its broad bosom to the sky seems hardly big enough to launch a fleet of cockle-shells.

Wilson's historical landscapes, the two *Niobes*, *Celadon and Amelia*, *Meleager and Atalanta*, do not, in our opinion, deserve the name; that is, they do not excite feelings corresponding with the scene and story represented. They neither display true taste nor fine imagination, but are affected and violent exaggerations of clumsy common nature. They are made up mechanically of the same stock of materials, an overhanging rock, bare shattered trees, black rolling clouds, and forked lightning. The scene of *Celadon and Amelia*, though it may be proper for a thunder-storm, is not a place for lovers to walk in. The *Meleager and Atalanta* is remarkable for nothing but a castle at a distance, very much "resembling a goose-pie." The figures in the most celebrated of these are not like the children of Niobe punished by the gods, but like a group of rustics crouching from a hail storm. I agree with Sir Joshua Reynolds that Wilson's mind was not, like N. Poussin's, sufficiently imbued with the knowledge of antiquity to transport the imagination three thousand years back, to give natural objects a sympathy with preternatural events, and to inform rocks and trees and mountains with the presence of a God; but nevertheless his landscapes will ever afford a high treat to the lover of the art. In all that relates to the gradation of tint, to the graceful conduct and proportions of light and shade, and to the fine, deep, and harmonious tones of nature, they are models for the student.

In his Italian landscapes his eye seems almost to have drunk in the light.

To sum up this general character I may observe that, besides his excellence in aerial perspective, Wilson had great truth, harmony, and depth of local colouring. He had a fine feeling of the proportions and conduct of light and shade, and also an eye for graceful form, as far as regards the bold and varying outlines of indefinite objects, as may be seen in his foregrounds, hills, &c., where the mind is left to muse according to an abstract principle, as it is filled or affected agreeably by certain combinations, and is not tied down to an imitation of characteristic and articulate forms. In his figures, trees, cattle, and in everything having a determinate and regular form, his pencil was not only deficient in accuracy of outline but even in perspective and actual relief. His trees, in particular, seem pasted on the canvas, like botanical specimens. In fine, I cannot subscribe the opinion of those who assert that Wilson was superior to Claude as a man of genius; nor can I discern any other grounds for this opinion than what would lead to the general conclusion, that the more slovenly the work the finer the picture, and that that which is imperfect is superior to that which is perfect. It might be said, on the same principle, that the coarsest sign-painting is better than the reflection of a landscape in a mirror. The objection that is sometimes made to the mere imitation of nature cannot be made to the landscapes of Claude, for in them the graces themselves have with their own hands assisted in selecting and disposing every object. Is the truth inconsistent with the beauty of the imitation? Does the perpetual profusion of objects and scenery, all perfect in themselves, interfere with the simple grandeur and comprehensive magnificence of the whole? Does the precision with which a plant is marked in the foreground take away from the air-drawn distinctions of the blue glimmering horizon? Is there any want of that endless airy space,

where the eye wanders at liberty under the open sky, explores distant objects, and returns back as from a delightful journey? There is in fact no comparison between Claude and Wilson. Sir Joshua Reynolds used to say that there would be another Raffaele before there would be another Claude. His landscapes have all that is exquisite and refined in art and nature. Everything is moulded into grace and harmony; and, at the touch of his pencil, shepherds with their flocks, temples and groves, and winding glades and scattered hamlets, rise up in never-ending succession under the azure sky and the resplendent sun, while

"Universal Pan,
Knit with the graces and the hours in dance,
Leads on the eternal spring."

Michael Angelo has left in one of his sonnets a fine apostrophe to the earliest poet of Italy:

"Fain would I, to be what our Dante was,
Forego the happiest fortunes of mankind."

What landscape painter does not feel this of Claude?*

I have heard an anecdote, connected with the reputation of Gainsborough's pictures, which rests on pretty good authority. Sir Joshua Reynolds, at one of the Academy dinners, speaking of Gainsborough, said to a friend, "He is undoubtedly the best English landscape painter." "No," said Wilson, who overheard the conversation, "he is not the best landscape-painter, but he is the best portrait-painter in England." They were both wrong; but the story is creditable to the versatility of Gainsborough's talents. Those of his portraits which we have seen are not in the first rank. They are, in a good measure, imitations of Vandyck, and have more an air of gentility than

* This painter's book of studies from nature, commonly called "*Liber Veritatis*," dispenses the truth of the general opinion that his landscapes are mere artificial compositions, for the finished pictures are nearly facsimiles of the original sketches.

nature.* His landscapes are of two classes or periods, his early and his later pictures. The former are minute imitations of nature, or of painters who imitated nature, such as Ruysdael, &c., some of which have great truth and clearness. His later pictures are flimsy caricatures of Rubens, who himself carried inattention to the details to the utmost limit that it would bear. Many of Gainsborough's later landscapes may be compared to bad water-colour drawings, washed in by mechanical movements of the hand, without any communication with the eye. The truth seems to be that Gainsborough found there was something wanting in his early manner, that is, something beyond the literal imitations of the details of natural objects; and he appears to have concluded rather hastily, that the way to arrive at that something more was to discard truth and nature altogether.† His fame rests princi-

* Gainsborough's *Portrait of a Youth*, that used to be in Lord Grosvenor's collection, has been sometimes mistaken for a Vandyck. There is a spirited glow of youth about the face, and the attitude is striking and elegant. The drapery of blue satin is admirably painted. His *Portrait of Garrick* is interesting as a piece of biography. He looks much more like a gentleman than in Reynolds's tragi-comic representation of him. There is a considerable lightness and intelligence in the expression of the face, and a piercing vivacity about the eyes, to which the attention is immediately directed. Gainsborough's own portrait, which has, however, much truth and character, and makes a fine print, seems to have been painted with the handle of his brush. There is a portrait of *The Prince Regent leading a Horse*, in which it must be confessed the man has the advantage of the animal. —*Morning Chronicle*, 1815.

† He, accordingly, ran from one extreme into the other. We cannot conceive anything carried to a greater excess of slender execution and paltry glazing than *A Fox hunted with Greyhounds*, *A Romantic Landscape with Sheep at a Fountain*, and many others. We were, however, much pleased with an upright landscape with figures, which has a fine, fresh appearance of the open sky, with a dash of the wildness of Salvator Rosa; and also with *A Bank of a River*, which is remarkable for the elegance of the forms and the real delicacy of the execution. *A Group of Cattle in a Warm Landscape*, is an evident imitation of Rubens, but no more like to Rubens than we to Hercules. *A Landscape with a Waterfall* should be noticed for the sparkling clear-

pally, at present, on his fancy pieces, cottage children, shepherd boys, &c. These have often great truth, great sweetness; and the subjects are generally chosen with great felicity. We too often find, however, in his happiest efforts a consciousness in the turn of the limbs and a pensive languor in the expression which are not taken from nature. I think the gloss of art is never so ill-bestowed as on such subjects, the essence of which is simplicity. It is, perhaps, the general fault of Gainsborough that he presents us with an ideal common life, of which we have had a surfeit in poetry and romance. His subjects are softened and sentimentalised too much; it is not simple unaffected nature that we see but nature sitting for her picture. Our artist, we suspect, led the way to that masquerade style which piques itself on giving the air of an Adonis to the driver of a hay-cart, and models the features of a milk-maid on the principles of the antique. His *Woodman's Head* is admirable. Nor can too much praise be given to his *Shepherd Boy in a Storm*, in which the unconscious simplicity of the boy's expression, looking up with his hands folded and with timid wonder, the

ness of the distance. *Sportsman in a Landscape* is copied from Teniers with much taste and feeling, though very inferior to the original picture in Lord Radnor's collection.

Of his fancy pictures, on which Gainsborough's fame chiefly rests, we are disposed to give the preference to his *Cottage Children*. There is, we speak humbly, greater truth, variety, force, and character in this group than in any other. The coloring of the light-haired child is particularly true to nature, and forms a sort of natural and innocent contrast to the dark complexion of the elder sister, who is carrying it. *The Girl seated to the Well* is, however, the general favourite. The little dog is certainly admirable; his look looks as if it had been just washed and combed. The attitude of the girl is also perfectly easy and natural. But there is a consciousness in the turn of the head and a sentimental pensiveness in the expression which are not taken from nature, but intended as an improvement on it! There is a regular beauty, a systematic vacancy, a round, unvaried smoothness, to which real nature is a stranger, and which is only an idea existing in the painter's mind. — *Monthly Chronicle*, 1814.

noisy chattering of a magpie perched above, and the rustling of the coming storm in the branches of the trees, produce a most delightful and romantic impression on the mind. Gainsborough was to be considered, perhaps, rather as a man of delicate taste and of an elegant and feeling mind than as a man of genius; as a lover of the art rather than an artist. He devoted himself to it, with a view to amuse and soothe his mind, with the ease of a gentleman, not with the severity of a professional student. He wished to make his pictures, like himself, amiable; but a too constant desire to please almost unavoidably leads to affectation and effeminacy. He wanted that vigour of intellect which perceives the beauty of truth, and thought that painting was to be gained, like other mistresses, by flattery and smiles. It was an error which we are disposed to forgive in one around whose memory, both as an artist and a man, many fond recollections, many vain regrets, must always linger.*

The authority of Sir Joshua Reynolds, both from his example and instructions, has had, and still continues to have, a considerable influence on the state of art in this country. That influence has been, on the whole, unquestionably beneficial in itself, as well as highly creditable to the rare talents and elegant mind of Sir Joshua; for it has raised the art of painting from the lowest state of degradation—of dry, meagre, lifeless inanity—to something at least respectable, and bearing an affinity to the rough strength and bold spirit of the national character. Whether the same implicit deference to his authority, which has helped to advance the art thus far, may not, among other causes, limit and retard its future progress; whether there are not certain original errors, both in his

* The idea of the necessity of improving upon nature, and giving what was called a flattering likeness, was universal in this country fifty years ago, so that Gainsborough is not to be so much blamed for tampering with his subjects.

principles and practice which, the farther they are proceeded in, the farther they will lead us from the truth ; whether there is not a systematic bias from the right line, by which alone we can arrive at the goal of the highest perfection, are questions well worth considering.

I shall begin with Sir Joshua's merits as an artist. There is one error which I wish to correct at setting out, because I think it important. There is not a greater or more unaccountable mistake than the supposition that Sir Joshua Reynolds owed his success or excellence in his profession to his having been the first who introduced into this country more general principles of the art, and who raised portrait to the dignity of history from the low drudgery of copying the peculiarities, meannesses, and details of individual nature, which was all that had been attempted by his immediate predecessors. This is so far from being true that the very reverse is the fact. If Sir Joshua did not give these details and peculiarities so much as might be wished, those who went before him did not give them at all. Those pretended general principles of the art which, it is said, "alone give value and dignity to it," had been pushed to their extremest absurdity before his time ; and it was in getting rid of the mechanical, systematic monotony and *nichie forms*, by the help of which Lely, Kneller, Hudson, the French painters, and others, carried on their manufactories of history and face painting, and in returning (as far as he did return) to the truth and force of individual nature, that the secret both of his fame and fortune lay. The pedantic, servile race of artists whom Reynolds superseded had carried the abstract principle of improving on nature to such a degree of refinement that they left it out altogether, and confounded all the varieties and irregularities of form, feature, character, expression, or attitude, in the same artificial mould of fancied grace and fashionable insipidity. The portraits of Kneller, for example, seem all to have been turned in a machine ; the eye-brows are arched as if by a

compass, the mouth curled, and the chin dimpled ; the head turned on one side, and the hands placed in the same affected position. The portraits of this mannerist, therefore, are as like one another as the dresses which were then in fashion, and have the same "dignity and value" as the full-bottomed wigs which graced their originals. The superiority of Reynolds consisted in his being varied and natural, instead of being artificial and uniform. The spirit, grace, or dignity which he added to his portraits, he borrowed from nature, and not from the ambiguous quackery of rules. His feeling of truth and nature was too strong to permit him to adopt the unmeaning style of Kneller and Hudson ; but his logical acuteness was not such as to enable him to detect the verbal fallacies and speculative absurdities which he had learned from Richardson and Coypel ; and, from some defects in his own practice he was led to confound negligence with grandeur. But of this hereafter.

Sir Joshua Reynolds owed his great superiority over his contemporaries to incessant practice and habitual attention to nature, to quick organic sensibility, to considerable power of observation, and still greater taste in perceiving and availing himself of those excellences of others which lay within his own walk of art. I can by no means look upon Sir Joshua as having a claim to the first rank of genius. He would hardly have been a great painter, if other great painters had not lived before him. He would not have given a first impulse to the art ; nor did he advance any part of it beyond the point where he found it. He did not present any new view of nature, nor is he to be placed in the same class with those who did. Even in colour, his pallet was spread for him by the old masters ; and his eye imbibed its full perception of depth and harmony of tone from the Dutch and Venetian schools rather than from nature. His early pictures are poor and flimsy. He, indeed, learned to see the finer qualities of

nature through the works of art, which he perhaps might never have discovered in nature itself. He became rich by the accumulation of borrowed wealth, and his genius was the offspring of taste. He combined and applied the materials of others to his own purpose with admirable success; he was an industrious compiler or skilful translator, not an original inventor, in art. The art would remain in all its essential elements, just where it is, if Sir Joshua had never lived. He has supplied the industry of future plagiarists with no new materials. But it has been well observed that the value of every work of art, as well as the genius of the artist, depends not more on the degree of excellence than on the degree of originality displayed in it. Sir Joshua, however, was perhaps the most original imitator that ever appeared in the world; and the reason of this, in a great measure, was that he was compelled to combine what he saw in art with what he saw in nature, which was constantly before him. The portrait-painter is, in this respect, much less liable than the historical painter to deviate into the extremes of manner and affectation; for he cannot discard nature altogether under the excuse that *she only puts him out*. He must meet her face to face; and if he is not incorrigible, he will see something there that cannot fail to be of service to him. Another circumstance which must have been favourable to Sir Joshua was that, though not the originator in *point of time*, he was the first Englishman who transplanted the higher excellences of his profession into his own country, and had the merit, if not of an inventor, of a reformer of the art. His mode of painting had the graces of novelty in the age and country in which he lived; and he had, therefore, all the stimulus to exertion which arose from the enthusiastic applause of his contemporaries, and from a desire to expand and refine the taste of the public.

To an eye for colour, and for effects of light and shade, Sir Joshua united a strong perception of individual

character, a lively feeling of the quaint and grotesque in expression, and great mastery of execution. He had comparatively little knowledge of drawing, either as it regarded proportion or form. The beauty of some of his female faces and figures arises almost entirely from their softness and fleshiness. His pencil wanted firmness and precision. The expression, even of his best portraits, seldom implies either lofty or impassioned intellect or delicate sensibility. He also wanted grace, if grace requires simplicity. The mere negation of stiffness and formality is not grace ; for looseness and distortion are not grace. His favourite attitudes are not easy and natural, but the affectation of ease and nature. They are violent deviations from a right line. Many of the figures in his fancy pieces are placed in postures in which they could not remain for an instant without extreme difficulty and awkwardness. I may instance the *Girl Drawing with a Pencil*, and some others. His portraits are his best pictures, and of these his portraits of men are the best ; his pictures of children are the next in value. He had fine subjects for the former, from the masculine sense and originality of character of many of the persons whom he painted ; and he had also a great advantage, as far as practice went, in painting a number of persons of every rank and description. Some of the finest and most interesting are those of Dr Johnson, Goldsmith (which is, however, too much a mere sketch), Baretti, Dr Burney, John Hunter, and the inimitable portrait of Bishop Newton. The elegant simplicity of character, expression, and drawing preserved throughout the last picture, even to the attitude and mode of handling, discover the true genius of a painter. I also remember to have seen a print of Thomas Warton, than which nothing could be more characteristic or more natural. These were all Reynolds's intimate acquaintance, and it could not be said of them that they were men of "no mark or likeness." Their traits had probably sunk deep into the

artist's mind ; he painted them as pure studies from nature, copying the real image existing before him with all its known characteristic peculiarities ; and, with as much wisdom as good nature, sacrificing the graces on the altar of friendship. They are downright portraits and nothing more, and they are valuable in proportion. In his portraits of women, on the contrary, with very few exceptions Sir Joshua appears to have consulted either the vanity of his employer or his own fanciful theory. They have not the look of individual nature, nor have they, to compensate the want of this, either peculiar elegance of form, refinement of expression, delicacy of complexion, or gracefulness of manner. Vandyck's attitudes have been complained of as stiff and confined. Reynolds, to avoid this defect, has fallen into the contrary extreme of negligence and contortion. His female figures which aim at gentility are twisted into that serpentine line, the idea of which he ridiculed so much in Hogarth. Indeed, Sir Joshua in his "Discourses" (see his account of Correggio) speaks of grace as if it were nearly allied to affectation. Grace signifies that which is pleasing and natural in the posture and motions of the human form, as beauty is more properly applied to the form itself. That which is stiff, inanimate, and without motion, cannot therefore be graceful ; but to suppose that a figure, to be graceful, need only be put into some languishing or extravagant posture, is to mistake flutter and affectation for ease and elegance.

Sir Joshua's children, as I have said above, are among his *chef d'œuvre*. The faces of children have in general that want of precision of outline, that prominence of relief and strong contrast of colour, which were peculiarly adapted to his style of painting. The arch simplicity of expression and the grotesque character, which he has given to the heads of his children, were, however, borrowed from Correggio. His *Pauck* is the most masterly of all these ; and the colouring, execution, and character are alike exquisite.

The single figure of the *Infant Hercules* is also admirable. Many of those to which his friends have suggested historical titles are mere common portraits or casual studies. Thus the *Infant Samuel* is an innocent little child saying its prayers at the bed-foot; it has nothing to do with the story of the Hebrew prophet. The same objection will apply to many of his fancy pieces and historical compositions. There is often no connexion between the picture and the subject but the name. Even his celebrated *Iphigenia*, beautiful as she is, and prodigal of her charms, does not answer to the idea of the story. In drawing the naked figure, Sir Joshua's want of truth and firmness of outline became more apparent; and his mode of laying on his colours, which in the face and extremities was relieved and broken by the abrupt inequalities of surface and variety of tints in each part, produces a degree of heaviness and opacity in the larger masses of flesh colour, which can indeed only be avoided by extreme delicacy or extreme lightness of execution.

Shall I speak the truth at once? In my opinion, Sir Joshua did not possess either that high imagination or those strong feelings without which no painter can become a poet in his art. His larger historical compositions have been generally allowed to be most liable to objection in a critical point of view. I shall not attempt to judge them by scientific or technical rules, but make one or two observations on the character and feeling displayed in them. The highest subject which Sir Joshua has attempted was the *Count Ugolino*, and it was, as might be expected from the circumstances, a total failure. He had, it seems, painted a study of an old beggar-man's head; and some person, who must have known as little of painting as of poetry, persuaded the unsuspecting artist that it was the exact expression of Dante's *Count Ugolino*, one of the most grand, terrific, and appalling characters in modern fiction. Reynolds, who knew nothing of the matter but what he

was told, took his good fortune for granted, and only extended his canvas to admit the rest of the figures. The attitude and expression of Count Ugolino himself are what the artist intended them to be, till they were pampered into something else by the officious vanity of friends—those of a common mendicant at the corner of a street, waiting patiently for some charitable donation. The imagination of the painter took refuge in a parish workhouse, instead of ascending the steps of the Tower of Famine. The hero of Dante is a lofty, high-minded, and unprincipled Italian nobleman, who had betrayed his country to the enemy, and who, as a punishment for his crime, is shut up with his four sons in the dungeon of the citadel, where he shortly finds the doors barred upon him, and food withheld. He in vain watches with eager feverish eye the opening of the door at the accustomed hour, and his looks turn to stone; his children one by one drop down dead at his feet; he is seized with blindness, and, in the agony of his despair, he gropes on his knees after them,

“ Calling each by name
For three days after they were dead.”

Even in the other world he is represented with the same fierce, dauntless, unrelenting character, “ gnawing the skull of his adversary, his fell repast.” The subject of the *Laocoon* is scarcely equal to that described by Dante. The horror *there* is physical and momentary; in the other, the imagination fills up the long, obscure, dreary void of despair, and joins its unutterable pangs to the loud cries of nature. What is there in the picture to convey the ghastly horrors of the scene, or the mighty energy of soul with which they were borne? His picture of *Macbeth* is full of wild and grotesque images; and the apparatus of the witches contains a very elaborate and well arranged inventory of dreadful objects. His *Cardinal Beaufort* is a fine display of rich, mellow colouring; and there is something gentlemanly

and Shakespearian in the King and the Attendant Nobleman. At the same time, I think the expression of the Cardinal himself is too much one of physical horror, a canine gnashing of the teeth, like a man strangled. This is not the best style of history. Mrs Siddons as the *Tragic Muse* is neither the Tragic Muse nor Mrs Siddons ; and I have still stronger objections to *Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy*.

There is a striking similarity between Sir Joshua Reynolds's theory and his practice ; and, as each of these has been appealed to in support of the other, it is necessary that I should examine both. Sir Joshua's practice was generally confined to the illustration of that part of his theory which relates to the more immediate imitation of nature ; and it is to what he says on this subject that I shall chiefly direct my observations at present.

He lays it down, as a general and invariable rule, that *the great style in art and the most PERFECT IMITATION OF NATURE consist in avoiding the details and peculiarities of particular objects.*" This sweeping principle he applies almost indiscriminately to *portrait, history, and landscape*, and he appears to have been led to the conclusion itself, from supposing the imitation of particulars to be inconsistent with general rule and effect. It appears to me that the highest perfection, of the art depends not on separating, but on uniting, general truth and effect with individual distinctness and accuracy.

First,—It is said that the great style in painting, as it relates to the immediate imitation of external nature, consists in avoiding the details of particular objects. It consists neither in giving nor avoiding them, but in something quite different from both. Any one may avoid the details. So far there is no difference between the *Cartoons* and a common sign-painting. Greatness consists in giving the larger masses and proportions with truth—this does not prevent giving the smaller ones too. The utmost

grandeur of outline, and the broadest masses of light and shade, are perfectly compatible with the utmost minuteness and delicacy of detail, as may be seen in nature. It is not, indeed, common to see both qualities combined in the imitations of nature, any more than the combinations of other excellences ; nor am I here saying to which the principal attention of the artist should be directed ; but I deny that, considered in themselves, the absence of the one quality is necessary or sufficient to the production of the other.

If, for example, the form of the eye-brow is correctly given, it will be perfectly indifferent to the truth or grandeur of the design whether it consists of one broad mark or is composed of a number of hair-lines arranged in the same order. So, if the lights and shades are disposed in fine and large masses, the *breadth* of the picture, as it is called, cannot possibly be affected by the filling up of these masses with the details—that is, with the subordinate distinctions which appear in nature. The anatomical details in Michael Angelo, the ever-varying outline of Raffaele, the perfect execution of the Greek statues, do not destroy their symmetry or dignity of form ; and in the finest specimens of the composition of colour we may observe the largest masses combined with the greatest variety, in the parts of which these masses are composed.

The gross style consists in giving no detail, the *fiat* in giving nothing else. Nature contains both large and small parts, both masses and details ; and the same may be said of the most perfect works of art. The union of both kinds of excellence, of strength with delicacy, as far as the limits of human capacity and the shortness of human life would permit, is that which has established the reputation of the most successful imitators of nature. Farther, their most finished works are their best. The predominance, indeed, of either excellence in the best masters has varied according to their opinion of the relative value of these qualities, the labour they had the time or the patience to

bestow on their works, the skill of the artist, or the nature and extent of his subject. But if the rule here objected to, that the careful imitation of the parts injures the effect of the whole, be once admitted, slovenliness would become another name for genius, and the most unfinished performances would be the best. That such has been the confused impression left on the mind by the perusal of Sir Joshua Reynolds's "Discourses," is evident from the practice as well as conversation of many (even eminent) artists. The late Mr Opie proceeded entirely on this principle. He left many admirable studies of portraits, particularly in what relates to the disposition and effect of light and shade ; but he never finished any of the parts, thinking them beneath the attention of a great artist. He went over the whole head the second day as he had done the first, and therefore made no progress. The pictures, at last, having neither the lightness of a sketch nor the accuracy of a finished work, looked coarse, laboured, and heavy. Titian is the most perfect example of high finishing. In him the details are engrafted on the most profound knowledge of effect and attention to the character of what he represented. His pictures have the exact look of nature, the very tone and texture of flesh. The variety of his tints is blended into the greatest simplicity. There is a proper degree both of solidity and transparency. All the parts hang together ; every stroke tells, and adds to the effect of the rest. Sir Joshua seems to deny that Titian finished much, and says that he produced by two or three strokes of his pencil effects which the most laborious copyist would in vain attempt to equal. It is true, he availed himself in some degree of what is called *caccuon*, to facilitate his imitation of the details and peculiarities of nature ; but it was to facilitate, not supersede. There can be nothing more distinct than execution and daubing. Titian, however, made a very moderate, though a very admirable use of this power ; and those who copy his pictures will find that the simplicity is in the

results, not in the details. To conclude my observations on this head, I will only add that, while the artist thinks there is anything to be done either to the whole or the parts of his picture, which can give it still more the look of nature, if he is willing to proceed, I would not advise him to desist. This rule is the more necessary to the young student, for he will relax in his attention as he grows older. And again, with respect to the subordinate parts of a picture, there is no danger that he will bestow a disproportionate degree of labour upon them, because he will not feel the same interest in copying them, and because a much less degree of accuracy will serve every purpose of deception.

Secondly,—With regard to the imitation of expression, I can hardly agree with Sir Joshua, that “the perfection of portrait-painting consists in giving the general idea or character without the individual peculiarities.” No doubt, if we had to choose between the general character and the peculiarities of feature, we ought to prefer the former. But they are so far from being incompatible with, that they are not without some difficulty distinguishable from, each other. There is a general look of the face, a predominant expression arising from the correspondence and connection of the different parts, which it is of the first and last importance to give, and without which no elaboration of detached parts, or marking of the peculiarities of single features, is worth anything; but which at the same time is not destroyed, but assisted, by the careful finishing, and still more by giving the exact outline, of each part.

It is on this point that the modern French and English schools differ, and, in my opinion, are both wrong. The English seem generally to suppose that if they only leave out the subordinate parts, they are sure of the general result. The French, on the contrary, as erroneously imagine that, by attending successively to each separate part, they must infallibly arrive at a correct whole: not considering

that, besides the parts, there is their relation to each other, and the general impression stamped upon them by the character of the individual, which, to be seen, must be felt ; for it is demonstrable that all character and expression, to be adequately represented, must be perceived by the mind, and not by the eye only. The French painters give only lines and precise differences ; the English, only general masses and strong effects. Hence the two nations reproach one another with the difference of their styles of art—the one as dry, hard, and minute—the other as gross, gothic, and unfinished ; and they will probably remain for ever satisfied with each other's defects, as they afford a very tolerable fund of consolation on either side.

Much has been said of *historical portraits*, and I have no objection to this phrase, if properly understood. The giving of historical truth to a portrait means, then, the representing of the individual under one consistent, probable, and striking view ; or showing the different features, muscles, &c., in one action, and modified by one principle. A portrait thus painted may be said to be *historical* ; that is, it carries internal evidence of truth and propriety with it ; and the number of individual peculiarities, as long as they are true to nature, cannot lessen, but must add to, the strength of the general impression.

It might be shown, if there were room in this place, that Sir Joshua has constructed his theory of the *ideal* in art upon the same mistaken principle of the negation or abstraction of a *particular nature*. The *ideal* is not a negative but a positive thing. The leaving out the details or peculiarities of an individual face does not make it one jot more ideal. To paint history is to paint nature as answering to a general, predominant, or pre-conceived idea in the mind, of strength, beauty, action, passion, thought, &c. ; but the way to do this is not to leave out the details, but to incorporate the general idea with the details : that is, to show the same expression actuating and modifying every

movement of the muscles, and the same character preserved consistently through every part of the body. Grandeur does not consist in omitting the parts, but in connecting all the parts into a whole, and in giving their combined and varied action ; abstract truth or ideal perfection does not consist in rejecting the peculiarities of form, but in rejecting all those which are not consistent with the character intended to be given, and in following up the same *general idea* of softness, voluptuousness, strength, activity, or any combination of these, through every ramification of the frame.

But these modifications of form or expression can only be learnt from nature, and therefore the perfection of art must always be sought in nature. The ideal properly applies as much to the *idea* of ugliness, weakness, folly, meanness, vice, as of beauty, strength, wisdom, magnanimity, or virtue. The antique heads of fauns and satyrs, of Pan or Silenus, are quite as ideal as those of Apollo or Bacchus ; and Hogarth adhered to an idea of humour in his faces as Raffaele did to an idea of sentiment. But Raffaele found the character of sentiment in nature as much as Hogarth did that of humour, otherwise neither of them would have given one or the other with such perfect truth, purity, force, and keeping. Sir Joshua Reynolds's *ideal*, as consisting in a mere negation of individuality, bears just the same relation to real beauty or grandeur as caricature does to true comic character.

It is owing either to a mistaken theory of elevated art, or to the want of models in nature, that the English are hitherto without any painter of serious historical subjects, who can be placed in the first rank of genius. Many of the pictures of modern artists have evidenced a capacity for correct and happy delineations of actual objects and domestic incidents only inferior to the masterpieces of the Dutch school. I might here mention the names of Wilkie, Collins, Heaphy, and others. We have portrait painters who have attained

to a very high degree of excellence in all the branches of their art. In landscape, Turner has shown a knowledge of the effects of air, and of powerful relief in objects, which was never surpassed. But in the highest walk of art—in giving the movements of the finer and loftier passions of the mind, this country has not produced a single painter who has made even a faint approach to the excellence of the great Italian painters. We have, indeed, a good number of specimens of the clay figure, the anatomical mechanism, the regular proportions measured by a two-foot rule—large canvases, covered with stiff figures, arranged in deliberate order, with the characters and story correctly expressed by uplifted eyes or hands, according to old receipt-books for the passions; with all the hardness and inflexibility of figures carved in wood, and painted over in good strong body colours, that look “as if some of nature’s journeymen had made them, and not made them well.” But we still want a Prometheus to give life to the cumbrous mass—to throw an intellectual light over the opaque image—to embody the inmost refinements of thought to the outward eye—to lay bare the very soul of passion. That picture is of little comparative value which can be completely *translated* into another language—of which the description in a common catalogue conveys all that is expressed by the picture itself; for it is the excellence of every art to give what can be given by no other in the same degree. Much less is that picture to be esteemed which only injures and defaces the idea already existing in the mind’s eye; which does not come up to the conception which the imagination forms of the subject, and substitutes a dull reality for high sentiments; for the art is in this case an incumbrance, not an assistance, and interferes with, instead of adding to, the stock of our pleasurable sensations. But I should be at a loss to point out, I will not say any English picture, but certainly any English painter, that, in heroic and classical composition, has risen to the height of the subject, and

answered the expectations of the well-informed spectator, or excited the same impression by visible means as had been excited by words or by reflection.* That this inferiority in English art is not owing to a deficiency of English genius, imagination, or passion, is proved sufficiently by the works of our poets and dramatic writers, which in loftiness and force are not surpassed by those of any other nation. But whatever may be the depth of internal thought and feeling in the English character, it seems to be *more internal*; and, whether this is owing to habit or physical constitution, to have comparatively a less immediate and powerful communication with the organic expression of passion—which exhibits the thoughts and feelings in the countenance, and furnishes matter for the historic muse of painting. The English artist is instantly sensible that the flutter, grimace, and extravagance of the French physiognomy are incompatible with high history; and we are at no loss to explain, in this way, that is from the defect of living models, that the productions of the French school on the one hand are marked with all the affectation of national caricature, or on the other sink into tame and lifeless imitations of the antique. May we not account satisfactorily for the general defects of our own historic productions in a similar way—from a certain inertness and constitutional phlegm, which does not habitually impress the workings of the mind in correspondent traces on the countenance, and which may also render us less sensible of these outward and visible signs of passion, even when they are so impressed there? The irregularity of proportion and want of symmetry in the structure of the national features, though it certainly enhances the difficulty of infusing natural grace and grandeur into the works of art, rather accounts for our not having been able to attain the exquisite refinements

* If I were to make any qualification of this censure, it would be in favour of some of Northcote's compositions from early English history.

of Grecian sculpture, than for our not having rivalled the Italian painters in expression.

Mr West formed no exception to, but a confirmation of, these general observations. His pictures have all that can be required in what relates to the composition of the subject, to the regular arrangement of the groups, the anatomical proportions of the human body, and the technical knowledge of expression—as far as expression is reducible to abstract rules, and is merely a vehicle for the telling of a story, so that anger, wonder, sorrow, pity, &c., have each their appropriate and well-known designations. These, however, are but the instrumental parts of the art, the means not the end; but beyond these Mr West's pictures do not go. They never “snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.” They exhibit the *mask*, not the *soul*, of expression. I doubt whether, in the entire range of Mr West's productions, meritorious and admirable as the design and composition often are, there is to be found one truly fine head. They display a total want of gusto. In Raffaele, the same divine spirit breathes through every part; it either agitates the inmost frame, or plays in gentle undulations on the trembling surface. Whether we see his figures bending with all the blandishments of maternal love, or standing in the motionless silence of thought, or hurried into the tumult of action, the whole is under the impulse of deep passion. But Mr West saw hardly anything in the human face but bones and cartilages; or if he availed himself of the more flexible machinery of nerves and muscles it was only by rule and method. The effect is not that which the soul of passion impresses on the countenance, and which the soul of genius alone can seize, but such as might, in a good measure, be given to wooden puppets or pasteboard figures, pulled by wires, and taught to open the mouth, or knit the forehead, or raise the eyes in a very scientific manner. In fact, there is no want of art or limning in his pictures, but of nature and feeling.

It is not long since an opinion was very general that all, that was wanting to the highest splendour and perfection of the arts in this country might be supplied by academies and public institutions. There are *three* ways in which academies and public institutions may be supposed to promote the fine arts ; either by furnishing the best models to the student, or by holding out immediate emolument and patronage, or by improving the public taste. I shall bestow a short consideration on the influence of each.

First, a constant reference to the best models of art necessarily tends to enervate the mind, to intercept our view of nature, and to distract the attention by a variety of unattainable excellences. An intimate acquaintance with the works of the celebrated masters may indeed add to the indolent refinements of taste, but will never produce one work of original genius, one great artist. In proof of the general truth of this observation, I might cite the history of the progress and decay of art in all countries where it has flourished.

The directors of the British Institution conclude the preface to their catalogue of the works of Hogarth, Wilson, &c., in the following words : “ The present exhibition, while it gratifies the taste and feeling of the lover of art, may tend to excite animating reflections in the mind of the artist : *if at a time when the art received little comparative support such works were produced, a reasonable hope may be entertained that we shall see productions of still higher attainment under more encouraging circumstances.*”

It should seem that a contrary conclusion might more naturally have suggested itself from a contemplation of the collection with which the directors of the institution have so highly gratified the public taste and feeling. When the real lover of art looks round and sees the works of Hogarth and Wilson—works which were produced in obscurity and poverty—and recollects the pomp and pride of patronage under which these works are at present recommended to public notice, the obvious inference which strikes him is,

how little the production of such works depends on "the most encouraging circumstances." The visits of the gods of old did not always add to the felicity of those whose guests they were; nor do we know that the countenance and favours of the great will lift the arts to that height of excellence, or will confer all those advantages which are expected from the proffered boon. The arts are of humble growth and station; they are the product of labour and self-denial; they have their seat in the heart of man and his imagination; it is there they labour, have their triumphs there, and, unseen and unthought-of, perform their ceaseless task. Indeed, patronage and works of art deserving patronage rarely exist together; for it is only when the arts have attracted public esteem, and reflect credit on the patron, that they receive this flattering support, and then it generally proves fatal to them. We do not see how the man of genius should be improved by being transplanted from his closet to the ante-chambers of the great, or to a fashionable rout. He has no business there—but to bow, to flatter, to smile, to submit to the caprice of taste, to adjust his dress, to think of nothing but his own person and his own interest, to talk of the antique, and furnish designs for the lids of snuff-boxes and ladies' fans.

The passage above alluded to evidently proceeds on the common mistaken notion that the progress of the arts depends entirely on the cultivation and encouragement bestowed on them; as if taste and genius were perfectly mechanical, arbitrary things—as if they could be bought and sold, and regularly contracted for at a given price. It confounds the fine arts with the mechanic arts—arts with science. It supposes that feeling, imagination, invention, are the creatures of positive institutions; that the temples of the Muses may be raised and supported by voluntary contributions; that we can enshrine the soul of art in a stately pile of royal patronage, inspire corporate bodies with taste, and carve out the direction to fame in letters of

stone on the front of public buildings. That the arts in any country may be at so low an ebb as to be capable of great improvement by positive means, so as to reach the common level to which such means can carry them, there is no doubt or question; but after they have in any particular instance, by native genius and industry, reached their highest eminence, to say that they will, by mere artificial props and officious encouragement, arrive at a point of "still higher attainment," is assuming a great deal too much. Are we to understand that the laudable efforts of the British Institution are likely, by mere operation of natural causes, to produce a greater comic painter, a more profound describer of manners, than Hogarth? or even that the lights and expectations held out in the preface to the British Catalogue will enable some one speedily to surpass the general excellence of Wilson's landscapes? Is there any theory in the history of art to warrant such a conclusion, —to support this theory of progressive perfectibility under the auspices of patrons and vice-patrons, presidents, and select committees? On the contrary, as far as the general theory is concerned, the traces of youth, manhood, and old age, are almost as distinctly marked in the history of the art as of the individual. The arts have in general risen rapidly from their first obscure dawn to their meridian height and greatest lustre, and have no sooner reached this proud eminence than they have as rapidly hastened to decay and dissolution. It is a little extraordinary that, if the real sources of perfection are to be sought in schools, in models, and public institutions, there the art should regularly disappear; that the effect should never follow from the cause. The Greek statues remain to this day unrivalled, the undisputed standard of the most perfect symmetry of form. What, then, has the genius of progressive improvement been doing all this time? Has he been reposing after his labours? How is it that the moderns are still so far behind, notwithstanding all that

was done ready to their hands by the ancients, when they possess a double advantage over them, and have not nature only to form themselves upon, but nature and the antique?

In Italy the art of painting has had the same fate. After its long and painful struggles in the time of the earliest artists, Cimabue, Ghirlandajo, Massaccio, &c., it bursts out into a light too dazzling to behold, in the works of Titian, Michael Angelo, Raffaele, and Correggio : which was reflected with diminished lustre in the productions of their immediate disciples ; lingered for a while with the school of Domenichino and the Caracci, and expired with Guido Reni ; for with him disappears

“ the last of those bright days
That on the unsteady breeze of honour sailed
In long procession, calm and beautiful.”

From that period painting sunk to so low a state in Italy as to excite only pity or contempt. There is not a single name to redeem its faded glory from utter oblivion. Yet this has not been owing to any want of Dilettanti and Della Cruscan Societies, of Academies of Florence, of Bologna, of Parma, and Pisa, of honorary members, and foreign correspondents, of pupils and teachers, professors and patrons, and the whole busy tribe of critics and connoisseurs. Art will not be constrained by mastery, but at sight of the formidable array prepared to receive it,

“ Spreads its light wings, and in a moment flies.”

The genius of painting lies buried under the Vatican, or skulks behind some old portrait of Titian, from which it stole out to paint a miniature of Lady Montague.

What is become of the successors of Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vandyck? What have the French academicians done for the art? or what will they ever do, but add intolerable affectation and grimace to centos of heads from the antique,

and caricature Greek forms by putting them into opera attitudes? Nicholas Poussin is the only example on record in favour of the contrary theory, and I have already sufficiently noticed his defects. What extraordinary advances have we made in our own country in consequence of the establishment of the Royal Academy? What greater names has the English school to boast than those of Hogarth, Reynolds, and Wilson, who created it? *

Again, I might cite, in support of my assertion, the works of Carlo Maretti, of Raphael Mengs, or of any of the effeminate school of critics and copyists who have attempted to blend the borrowed beauties of others in a perfect whole. What do they contain but a negation of every excellence which they pretend to combine? Inoffensive insipidity is the utmost that can ever be expected, because it is the utmost that ever was attained, from the desire to produce a balance of good qualities, and to animate lifeless compositions by the transfusion of a spirit of originality. The assiduous, but thoughtless, imitator, in his attempts to grasp all, loses his hold of that which was placed within his reach; and, from aspiring at universal excellence, sinks into uniform mediocrity. There is a certain pedantry, a given division of labour, an almost exclusive attention to some one object which is necessary in art, as in all the works of man. Without this, the unavoidable consequence is a gradual dissipation and prostitution of intellect, which leave the mind without energy to devote to any pursuit the pains necessary to excel in it, and suspend every purpose in irritable imbecility. But the modern painter is bound not only to run the circle of his own art but of all others. He must be "statesman, chemist, fiddler, and buffoon." He must have too many accomplishments to excel in his profession.

* Were Claude Lorraine or Nicholas Poussin formed by the rules of Dr Piles or Du Fresnoy? There are no general tickets of admission to the Temple of Fame, transferable to large societies or organised bodies — the paths leading to it are steep and narrow, for, by the time they are worn plain and easy, the niches are full.

When every one is bound to know everything, there is no time to do anything. Besides, the student who has models of every kind of excellence constantly before him is not only diverted from that particular walk of art in which, by patient exertion, he might have obtained ultimate success ; but from having his imagination habitually raised to an over-strained standard of refinement by the sight of the most exquisite examples in art, he becomes impatient and dissatisfied with his own attempts, determines to reach the same perfection all at once, or throws down his pencil in despair. Thus the young enthusiast, whose genius and energy were to rival the great masters of antiquity, or create a new era in the art itself, baffled in his first sanguine expectations, reposes in indolence on what others have done—wonders how such perfection could have been achieved—grows familiar with the minutest peculiarities of the different schools—flutters between the splendour of Rubens and the grace of Raffaele—finds it easier to copy pictures than to paint them, easier to see than to copy them, and ends in nothing. Such was not Correggio. He saw and felt for himself ; he was of no school, but had his own world of art to create. That image of truth and beauty which existed in his mind he was forced to construct for himself, without rules or models. As it could only have arisen in his mind from the contemplation of nature, so he could only hope to embody it to others by the imitation of nature. I can conceive the work growing under his hand by slow and patient touches, approaching nearer to perfection, softened into finer grace, gaining strength from delicacy, and at last reflecting the pure image of nature on the canvas. Such is always the true progress of art ; such are the necessary means by which the greatest works of every kind have been produced. They have been the effect of power gathering strength from exercise, and warmth from its own impulse—stimulated to fresh efforts by conscious success, and by the surprise and strangeness of a new world of beauty

opening to the delighted imagination. The triumphs of art were victorious over the difficulties of art ; the prodigies of genius, the result of that strength which had grappled with nature. Titian copied even a plant or a piece of common drapery from the objects themselves ; and Raffaele is known to have made elaborate studies of the principal heads in his pictures. All the great painters of this period were thoroughly grounded in the first principles of their art ; had learned to copy a head, a hand, or an eye, and had acquired patience to finish a single figure before they undertook to paint extensive compositions. They knew that though Fame is represented with her head above the clouds, her feet rest upon the earth. Genius, can only have its full scope where though much may have been done, more remains to do, where models exist chiefly to show the deficiencies of art, and where the perfect idea is left to be filled up in the painter's imagination. Where the stimulus of novelty and necessary exertion is wanting, generations repose on what has been done for them by their predecessors, as individuals, after a certain period, rest satisfied with the knowledge they have already acquired.

Secondly, with regard to the supposed pecuniary advantages arising from the public patronage of the arts, the plan unfortunately defeats itself ; for it multiplies its objects faster than it can satisfy their claims, and raises up a swarm of competitors for the prize of genius from the dregs of idleness and dulness. The real patron is anxious to reward merit, not to encourage gratuitous pretenders to it ; to see that the man of genius *takes no detriment*, that another Wilson is not left to perish for want ; not to propagate the breed, for that he knows to be impossible. But there are some persons who think it as essential to the interests of art to keep up "an aerie of children"—the young fry of embryo candidates for fame—as others think it essential to the welfare of the kingdom to preserve the spawn of the herring fisheries. In general, public, that is, indiscriminate, patronage

is, and can be nothing better than, a species of intellectual seduction, by administering provocatives to vanity and avarice. It is leading astray the youth of this nation by fallacious hopes, which can scarcely ever be realised ; it is beating up for raw dependents, sending out into the highways for the halt, the lame, and the blind, and making a scramble among a set of idle boys for prizes of the first, second, and third class, like those we make among children, for gingerbread toys. True patronage does not consist in ostentatious professions of high keeping, and promiscuous intercourse with the arts. At the same time the good that might be done by private taste and benevolence is in a great measure defeated. The moment that a few individuals of discernment and liberal spirit become members of a public body, they are no longer anything more than parts of a machine, which is usually wielded at will by some officious, overweening pretender ; their good sense and good nature are lost in a mass of ignorance and presumption ; their names only serve to reflect credit on proceedings in which they have no share, and which are determined upon by a majority of persons who have no interest in the arts but what arises to them from the importance attached to them by regular organisation, and no opinions but what are dictated to them by some self-constituted judge. Whenever vanity and self-importance are (as in general they must be) the governing principles of systems of public patronage, there is an end at once of all candour and directness of conduct. Their decisions are before the public ; and the individuals who take the lead in these decisions are responsible for them. They have, therefore, to manage the public opinion, in order to secure that of their own body. Hence, as far as I have had an opportunity of observing the conduct of such bodies of men, instead of taking the lead of public opinion, of giving a firm, manly, and independent tone to that opinion, they make it their business to watch all its caprices, and

follow it in every casual turning. They dare not give their sanction to sterling merit, struggling with difficulties ; but take advantage of its success to reflect credit on their own reputation for sagacity. Their taste is a servile dependant on their vanity, and their patronage has an air of pauperism about it. They neglect or treat with insult the favourite whom they suspect of having fallen off in the opinion of the public ; but, if he is able to recover his ground without their assistance, are ready to heap their mercenary bounties upon those of others, greet him with friendly congratulations, and share his triumph with him.

Perhaps the only public patronage which was ever really useful to the arts, or worthy of them, was that which they received first in Greece, and afterwards in Italy, from the religious institutions of the country ; when the artist felt himself, as it were, a servant at the altar ; when his hand gave a visible form to gods or heroes, angels or apostles ; and when the enthusiasm of genius was exalted by mingling with the flame of national devotion. The artist was not here degraded by being made the dependent on the caprice of wealth or fashion, but felt himself at once a public benefactor. He had to embody, by the highest efforts of his art, subjects which were sacred to the imaginations and feelings of the spectators ; there was a common link, a mutual sympathy, between them in their common faith.* Every other mode of patronage but that which

* Of the effect of the *authenticity* of the subject of a composition, in suspending the exercise of personal taste and feeling in the spectators, we have a striking instance in our own country, where this cause must, from collateral circumstances, operate less forcibly. Mr West's pictures would not be tolerated, but from the respect inspired by the subjects of which he treats. When a young lady and her mother, the wife and daughter of a clergyman, are told that a gawky ill-favoured youth is the beloved disciple of Christ, and that a tall, starched figure of a woman visible near him is the Virgin Mary, whatever they might have thought before, they can no more refrain from shedding tears than if they had seen the very persons recorded in sacred history. It is not the picture, but the associations connected with it, that produce the effect.

arises either from the general institutions and manners of a people, or from the real, unaffected taste of individuals, must, I conceive, be illegitimate, corrupted in its source, and either ineffectual or injurious to its professed object. Positive encouragements and rewards will not make an honest man or a great artist. The assumed familiarity and condescending goodness of patrons and vice-patrons will serve to intoxicate rather than to sober the mind, and a card to dinner in Cleveland Row or Portland Place will have a tendency to divert the student's thoughts from his morning's work, rather than to rivet them upon it. The device by which a celebrated painter has represented the Virgin teaching the infant Christ to read by pointing with a butterfly to the letters of the alphabet has not been thought a very wise one. Correggio is the most melancholy instance on record of the want of a proper encouragement of the arts : but a golden shower of patronage, tempting as that which fell into the lap of his own Danaë, and dropping prize medals and epic mottoes, would not produce another Correggio !

Lastly, Academicians and institutions may be supposed to assist the progress of the fine arts by promoting a wider taste for them.

In general, it must happen in the first stages of the arts that, as none but those who had a natural genius for them would attempt to practise them, so none but those who had a natural taste for them would pretend to judge of or criticise them. This must be an incalculable advantage to the man of true genius ; for it is no other than the privilege of being tried by his peers. In an age when connoisseurship had not become a fashion—when religion, war and intrigue occupied the time and thoughts of the great—only those minds of superior refinement would be led to notice the works of art, who had a real sense of their excellence ; and in giving way to the powerful bent of his own genius, the painter was most likely to consult the law

of his judges. He had not to deal with pretenders to taste through vanity, affectation, and idleness. He had to appeal to the higher faculties of the soul—to that deep and innate sensibility to truth and beauty, which required only fit objects to have its enthusiasm excited, and to that independent strength of mind which, in the midst of ignorance and barbarism, hailed and fostered genius wherever it met with it. Titian was patronised by Charles the Fifth. Count Castiglione was the friend of Raffaele. These were true patrons and true critics; and, as there were no others (for the world, in general, merely looked on and wondered), there can be little doubt that such a period of dearth of factitious patronage would be most favourable to the full development of the greatest talents and to the attainment of the highest excellence.

The diffusion of taste is not, then, the same thing as the improvement of taste; but it is only the former of these objects that is promoted by public institutions and other artificial means. The number of candidates for fame, and of pretenders to criticism, is thus increased beyond all proportion, but the quantity of genius and feeling remains the same, with this difference, that the man of genius is lost in the crowd of competitors, who would never have become such but from encouragement and example; and that the opinion of those few persons whom nature intended for judges is drowned in the noisy decisions of shallow smatterers in taste.

The principle of universal suffrage, however applicable to matters of government, which concern the common feelings and common interests of society, is by no means so to matters of taste, which can only be decided upon by the most refined understandings. It is throwing down the barriers which separate knowledge and feeling from ignorance and vulgarity, and proclaiming a Bartholomew-fair show of Fine Arts—

“And fools rush in where angels fear to tread.”

The public taste is, therefore, necessarily vitiated, in proportion as it is public ; it is lowered with every infusion it receives of common opinion. The greater the number of judges, the less capable must they be of judging, for the addition to the number of good ones will always be small, while the multitude of bad ones is endless, and thus the decay of art may be said to be the necessary consequence of its progress.

Can there be a greater confirmation of these remarks than to look at the texture of that assemblage of select critics, who every year visit the exhibition at Somerset House from all parts of the metropolis of this United Kingdom ? Is it at all wonderful that, for such a succession of connoisseurs, such a collection of works of art should be provided ; where the eye in vain seeks relief from the glitter of the frames in the glare of the pictures ; where vermilion cheeks make vermilion lips look pale ; where the merciless splendour of the painter's pallet puts nature out of countenance ; and where the unmeaning grimace of fashion and folly is almost the only variety in the wide dazzling waste of colour. Indeed, the great error of British art has hitherto been a desire to produce a popular effect by the cheapest and most obvious means, at the expense of everything else—to lose all the delicacy and variety of nature in one undistinguished bloom of florid health, and all precision, truth and refinement of character in the same harmless mould of smiling, self-complacent insipidity :

“ Pleased with itself, that all the world can please.”

It is probable that in all that stream of idleness and curiosity which flows in, hour after hour, and day after day, to the richly-lung apartments of Somerset House, there are not fifty persons to be found who can really distinguish “ a Guido from a daub,” or who would recognise a work of the most refined genius from the most common and every-day

performance. Come then, ye banks of Wapping, and classic haunts of Ratcliffe Highway, and join thy fields, blithe Tothill—let the post-chaises, gay with oaken boughs, be put in requisition for schoolboys from Eton and Harrow, and school-girls from Hackney and Mile-end—and let a jury be empanelled to decide on the merits of Raffaele and ———. The verdict will be infallible. We remember having been formerly a good deal amused with seeing a smart, handsome-looking Quaker lad, standing before a picture of Christ as the Saviour of the World, with a circle of young female friends around him, and a newspaper in his hand, out of which he read to his admiring auditors a criticism on the picture, ascribing to it every perfection, human and divine. Now, in truth, the colouring was anything but solemn, the drawing anything but grand, the expression anything but sublime. The friendly critic had, however, bedaubed it so with praise that it was not easy to gainsay its wondrous excellence. In fact, one of the worst consequences of the establishment of academies, &c., is that the rank and station of the painter throw a lustre round his pictures, which imposes completely on the herd of spectators, and makes it a kind of treason against the art for any one else to speak his mind freely or detect the imposture. If, indeed, the election to title and academic honours went by merit, this might form a kind of clue or standard for the public to decide justly upon; but we have heard that genius and taste determine precedence there almost as little as at Court; and that modesty and talent stand very little chance indeed with interest, cabal, impudence, and cunning. The purity or liberality of professional decisions cannot, therefore, in such cases be expected to counteract the tendency which an appeal to the public has to lower the standard of taste. The artist, to succeed, must let himself down to the level of his judges, for he cannot raise them up to his own. The highest efforts of genius, in every walk of art, can never be properly

understood by mankind in general ; there are numberless beauties and truths which lie far beyond their comprehension. It is only as refinement or sublimity is blended with other qualities of a more obvious and common nature, that they pass current with the world. Common sense, which has been sometimes appealed to as the criterion of taste, is nothing but the common capacity, applied to common facts and feelings ; but it neither is, nor pretends to be, the judge of anything else. To suppose that it can really appreciate the excellence of works of high art is as absurd as to suppose that it could produce them. Taste is the highest degree of sensibility, or the impression of the most cultivated and sensible minds, as genius is the result of the highest powers of feeling and invention. It may be objected that the public taste is capable of gradual improvement, because in the end the public do justice to works of the greatest merit. This is a mistake. The reputation ultimately and slowly affixed to works of genius is stamped upon them by authority, not by popular consent or the common sense of the world. We imagine that the admiration of the works of celebrated men has become common because the admiration of their names has become so. But does not every ignorant connoisseur pretend the same veneration, and talk with the same vapid assurance of M. Angelo, though he has never seen even a copy of any of his pictures, as if he had studied them accurately—merely because Sir J. Reynolds has praised him ? Is Milton more popular now than when the *Paradise Lost* was first published ? Or does he not rather owe his reputation to the judgment of a few persons in every successive period accumulating in his favour, and overpowering by its weight the public indifference ? Why is Shakespeare popular ? Not from his refinement of character or sentiment, so much as from his power of telling a story—the variety and invention—the tragic catastrophe and broad farce of his plays !

His characters of Imogen or Desdemona, Hamlet or Kent, are little understood or relished by the generality of readers. Does not Boccaccio pass to this day for a writer of ribaldry, because his jests and lascivious tales were all that caught the vulgar ear, while the story of the Falcon is forgotten ?

ON THE ELGIN MARBLES.

"Who to the life an exact piece would make
 Must not from others' work a copy take ;
 No, not from Rubens or Vandyck :
 Much less content himself to make it like
 Th' ideas and the images which lie
 In his own Fancy or his Memory.
 No ; he before his sight must place
 The natural and living face ;
 The real object must command
 Each judgment of his eye and motion of his hand."

THE true lesson to be learnt by our students and professors
 from the Elgin Marbles is the one which the ingenious and
 honest Cowley has expressed in the above spirited lines.
 The great secret is to recur at every step to nature—

"to learn
 Her manner, and with rapture taste her style."

It is evident to any one who views these admirable
 remains of Antiquity (nay, it is acknowledged by our
 artists themselves, in despite of all the melancholy sophistry
 which they have been taught or have been teaching others
 for half a century), that the chief excellence of the figures
 depends on their having been copied from nature and not
 from imagination. The communication of art with nature
 is here everywhere immediate, entire, palpable. The artist
 gives himself no fastidious airs of superiority over what he
 sees. He has not arrived at that stage of his progress
 described at much length in Sir Joshua Reynolds's Dis-
 courses, in which, having served out his apprenticeship to
 nature, he can set up for himself in opposition to her.
 According to the old Greek form of drawing up the

indentures in this case, we apprehend they were to last for life. At least, we can compare these Marbles to nothing but human figures petrified : they have every appearance of absolute *fac-similes* or casts taken from nature. The details are those of nature ; the masses are those of nature ; the forms are from nature ; the action is from nature ; the whole is from nature. Let any one, for instance, look at the leg of the Ilissus or River-God, which is bent under him—let him observe the swell and undulation of the calf, the inter-texture of the muscles, the distinction and union of all the parts, and the effect of action everywhere impressed on the external form, as if the very marble were a flexible substance, and contained the various springs of life and motion within itself, and he will own that art and nature are here the same thing. It is the same in the back of the Theseus, in the thighs and knees, and in all that remains unimpaired of these two noble figures. It is not the same in the cast (which was shown at Lord Elgin's) of the famous Torso by Michael Angelo, the style of which that artist appears to have imitated too well. There, every muscle has obviously the greatest prominence and force given to it of which it is capable in itself, not of which it is capable in connection with others. This fragment is an accumulation of mighty parts, without that play and re-action of each part upon the rest, without that "alternate action and repose" which Sir Thomas Lawrence speaks of as characteristic of the Theseus and the Ilissus, and which are as inseparable from nature as waves from the sea. The learned, however, here make a distinction, and suppose that the truth of nature is, in the Elgin Marbles, combined with ideal forms. If by *ideal forms* they mean fine natural forms, we have nothing to object ; but if they mean that the sculptors of the Theseus and Ilissus got the forms out of their own heads, and then tacked the truth of nature to them, we can only say, "Let them look again, let them look again." We consider the Elgin Marbles as a demonstration

of the impossibility of separating art from nature without a proportionable loss at every remove. The utter absence of all setness of appearance proves that they were done as studies from actual models. The separate parts of the human body may be given from scientific knowledge : their modifications or inflections can only be learnt by seeing them in action ; and the truth of nature is incompatible with ideal form, if the latter is meant to exclude actually existing form. The mutual action of the parts cannot be determined where the object itself is not seen. That the forms of these statues are not common nature, such as we see it every day, we readily allow ; that they were not select Greek nature we see no convincing reason to suppose. The truth of nature and ideal or fine form are not always or generally united, we know ; but how they can ever be united in art, without being first united in nature, is to us a mystery, and one that we as little believe as understand !

Suppose, for illustration's sake, that these Marbles were originally done as casts from actual nature, and then let us inquire whether they would not have possessed all the same qualities that they now display, granting only that the forms were in the first instance selected with the eye of taste, and disposed with knowledge of the art and of the subject.

First, the larger masses and proportions of entire limbs and divisions of the body would have been found in the casts, for they would have been found in nature. The back and trunk, and arms, and legs, and thighs would have been there, for these are parts of the natural man or actual living body, and not inventions of the artist, or *ideal* creations borrowed from the skies. There would have been the same sweep in the back of the Theseus ; the same swell in the muscles of the arm on which he leans ; the same division of the leg into calf and small, *i.e.*, the same general results, or aggregation of parts in the princi-

pal and most striking divisions of the body. The upper part of the arm would have been thicker than the lower, the thighs larger than the legs, the body larger than the thighs, in a cast taken from common nature; and in casts taken from the finest nature they would have been so in the same proportion, form, and manner as in the statue of the Theseus, if the Theseus answers to the *idea* of the finest nature; for the idea and the reality must be the same; only, we contend that the idea is taken from the reality, instead of existing by itself or being the creature of fancy. That is, there would be the same grandeur of proportions and parts in a cast taken from finely-developed nature, such as the Greek sculptors had constantly before them, naked and in action, that we find in the limbs and masses of bone, flesh, and muscle in these much and justly admired remains.

Again, and incontestibly, there would have been, besides the grandeur of form, all the *minutiae* and individual details in the cast that subsist in nature, and that find no place in the theory of *ideal* art—in the omission of which, indeed, its very grandeur is made to consist. The Elgin Marbles give a flat contradiction to this gratuitous separation of grandeur of design and exactness of detail, as incompatible in works of art, and we conceive that, with their whole ponderous weight to crush it, it will be difficult to set this theory on its legs again. In these majestic, colossal figures, nothing is omitted, nothing is made out by negation. The veins, the wrinkles in the skin, the indications of the muscles under the skin (which appear as plainly to the anatomist as the expert angler knows from an undulation on the surface of the water what fish is playing with his bait beneath it), the finger-joints, the nails, every the smallest part cognisable to the naked eye, is given here with the same ease and exactness, with the same prominence and the same subordination, that it would be in a cast from nature, *i.e.*, in nature itself.

Therefore, so far these things, *viz.*, nature, a cast from it, and the Elgin Marbles, are the same ; and all three are opposed to the fashionable and fastidious theory of the *ideal*. Look at Sir Joshua's picture of Puck, one of his finest-coloured and most spirited performances. The fingers are mere *spuds*, and we doubt whether any one can make out whether there are four toes or five allowed to each of the feet. If there had been a young Silenus among the Elgin Marbles, we don't know that in some particulars it would have surpassed Sir Joshua's masterly sketch, but we are sure that the extremities, the nails, &c., would have been studies of natural history. The life, the spirit, the character of the grotesque and imaginary little being would not have made an abortion of any part of his natural growth or form.

Farther, in a cast from nature there would be, as a matter of course, the same play and flexibility of limb and muscle, or, as Sir Thomas Lawrence expresses it, the same "alternate action and repose," that we find so admirably displayed in the Elgin Marbles. It seems here as if stone could move : where one muscle is strained, another is relaxed ; where one part is raised, another sinks in, just as in the ocean, where the waves are lifted up in one place, they sink proportionally low in the next : and all this modulation and affection of the different parts of the form by others arise from an attentive and co-instantaneous observation of the parts of a flexible body, where the muscles and bones act upon, and communicate with, one another, like the ropes and pulleys in a machine, and where the action or position given to a particular limb or membrane naturally extends to the whole body. This harmony, this combination of motion, this unity of spirit diffused through the wondrous mass and every part of it, is the glory of the Elgin Marbles. Put a well-formed human body in the same position and it will display the same character throughout ; make a cast from it while

in that position and action, and we shall still see the same bold, free, and comprehensive truth of design. There is no alliteration or antithesis in the style of the Elgin Marbles, no setness, squareness, affectation, or formality of appearance. The different muscles do not present a succession of *tumuli*, each heaving with big throes to rival the other. If one is raised, the other falls quietly into its place. Neither do the different parts of the body answer to one another, like shoulder-knots on a lacquey's coat or the different ornaments of a building. The sculptor does not proceed on architectural principles. His work has the freedom, the variety, and stamp of nature. The form of corresponding parts is indeed the same, but it is subject to inflection, from different circumstances. There is no primness or *petit maître-ship*, as in some of the later antiques, where the artist seemed to think that flesh was glass or some other brittle substance; and that if it were put out of its exact shape, it would break in pieces. Here, on the contrary, if the foot of one leg is bent under the body, the leg itself undergoes an entire alteration. If one side of the body is raised above the other, the original, or abstract, or *ideal* form of the two sides is not preserved strict and inviolable, but varies, as it necessarily must do, in conformity to the law of gravitation, to which all bodies are subject. In this respect, a cast from nature would be the same. Chantrey once made a cast from Wilson the Black. He put him into an attitude at first, and made the cast, but not liking the effect when done, got him to sit again, and made use of the plaster of Paris once more. He was satisfied with the result; but Wilson, who was tired with going through the operation, as soon as it was over, went and leaned upon a block of marble with his hands covering his face. The sagacious sculptor was so struck with the superiority of this natural attitude over those into which he had been arbitrarily put that he begged him (if possible) to continue in it for another quarter of

an hour, and another impression was taken off. All three casts remain, and the last is a proof of the superiority of nature over art. The effect of lassitude is visible in every part of the frame, and the strong feeling of this affection, impressed on every limb and muscle, and venting itself naturally in an involuntary attitude which gave immediate relief, is that which strikes every one who has seen this fine study from the life. The casts from this man's figure have been much admired—it is from no superiority of form: it is merely that, being taken from nature, they bear her “image and superscription.”

As to expression, the *Elgin Marbles* (at least the *Ilissus* and *Theseus*) afford no examples, the heads being gone.

Lastly, as to the *ideal* form, we contend it is nothing but a selection of fine nature, such as it was seen by the ancient Greek sculptors; and we say that a sufficient approximation to this form may be found in our own country, and still more in other countries, at this day, to warrant the clear conclusion that, under more favourable circumstances of climate, manners, &c., no vain imagination of the human mind could come up to entire natural forms; and that actual casts from Greek models would rival the common Greek statues, or surpass them in the same proportion and manner as the *Elgin Marbles* do. Or if this conclusion should be doubted, we are ready at any time to produce at least one cast from living nature which, if it does not furnish practical proof of all that we have here advanced, we are willing to forfeit the last thing we can afford to part with—a theory!

If then the *Elgin Marbles* are to be considered as authority in subjects of art, we conceive the following principles, which have not hitherto been generally received or acted upon in Great Britain, will be found to result from them:—

1. That art is, first and last, the imitation of nature.
2. That the highest art is the imitation of the finest

nature, that is to say, of that which conveys the strongest sense of pleasure or power, of the sublime or beautiful.

3. That the *ideal* is only the selecting a particular form which expresses most completely the idea of a given character or quality, as of beauty, strength, activity, voluptuousness, &c., and which preserves that character with the greatest consistency throughout.

4. That the *historical* is nature in action. With regard to the face, it is expression.

5. That grandeur consists in connecting a number of parts into a whole, and not in leaving out the parts.

6. That, as grandeur is the principle of connection between different parts, beauty is the principle of affinity between different forms, or rather gradual conversion into each other. The one harmonises, the other aggrandises our impressions of things.

7. That grace is the beautiful or harmonious in what relates to position or motion.

8. That grandeur of motion is unity of motion.

9. That strength is the giving the extremes softness, the uniting them.

10. That truth is to a certain degree beauty and grandeur, since all things are connected, and all things modify one another in nature. Simplicity is also grand and beautiful for the same reason. Elegance is ease and lightness, with precision.

We shall now proceed to elucidate these general principles in such manner as we are able.

1. The first is, that *art is, first and last, the imitation of nature*.

By nature, we mean actually existing nature or some one object to be found in *rerum naturâ*, not an idea of nature existing solely in the mind, got from an infinite number of different objects, but which was never yet embodied in an individual instance. Sir Joshua Reynolds may be ranked at the head of those who have maintained the

supposition that nature (or the universe of things) was indeed the ground-work or foundation on which art rested ; but that the superstructure rose above it, that it towered by degrees above the world of realities, and was suspended in the regions of thought alone—that a middle form, a more refined idea, borrowed from the observation of a number of particulars, but unlike any of them, was the standard of truth and beauty, and the glittering phantom that hovered round the head of the genuine artist :

“So from the ground
Spirits lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More airy, last the bright consummate flower!”

We have no notion of this vague, equivocal theory of art, and contend, on the other hand, that each image in art should have a *tally* or corresponding prototype in some object in nature. Otherwise, we do not see the use of art at all : it is a mere superfluity, an incumbrance to the mind, a piece of “laborious foolery”—for the word, the mere name of any object or class of objects will convey the general idea, more free from particular details or defects than any the most neutral and indefinite representation that can be produced by forms and colours. The word man, for instance, conveys a more filmy, impalpable, abstracted, and (according to this hypothesis) sublime idea of the species, than Michael Angelo’s Adam, or any real image can possibly do. If this then is the true object of art, the language of painting, sculpture, &c., becomes quite supererogatory. Sir Joshua and the rest contend that nature (properly speaking) does not express any single individual, nor the whole mass of things as they exist, but a general principle, a *something common* to all these, retaining the perfections, that is, all in which they are alike, and abstracting the defects, namely, all in which they differ : so that out of actual nature we compound an artificial nature, never answering to the former in any one part of its mock-existence, and which last is the true object o f

imitation to the aspiring artist. Let us adopt this principle of abstraction as the rule of perfection, and see what havoc it will make in all our notions and feelings in such matters. If the *perfect* is the *intermediate*, why not confound all objects, all forms, all colours at once? Instead of painting a landscape with blue sky, or white clouds, or green earth, or grey rocks and towers; what should we say if the artist (so named) were to treat all these "fair varieties" as so many imperfections and mistakes in the creation, and mass them altogether, by mixing up the colours on his palette in the same dull, leaden tone, and call this the true principle of epic landscape-painting? Would not the thing be abominable, an abortion, and worse than the worst Dutch picture? Variety then is one principle, one beauty in external nature, and not an everlasting source of pettiness and deformity, which must be got rid of at all events, before taste can set its seal upon the work, or fancy own it.

But, it may be said, it is different in things of the same species, and particularly in man, who is cast in a regular mould, which mould is one. What then, are we, on this pretext, to confound the difference of sex in a sort of hermaphrodite softness, as Mr Westall, Angelica Kauffman, and others have done in their effeminate performances? Are we to leave out of the scale of legitimate art the extremes of infancy and old age, as not *middle terms* in man's life? Are we to strike off from the list of available topics and sources of interest the varieties of character, of passion, of strength, activity, &c. &c.? Is everything to wear the same form, the same colour, the same unmeaning face? Are we only to repeat the same average idea of perfection, that is, our own want of observation and imagination, for ever, and to melt down the inequalities and excrescences of individual nature in the monotony of abstraction? Oh no! As well might we prefer the cloud to the rainbow; the dead corpse to the living, moving body! So Sir Joshua

debated upon Rubens's landscapes, and has a whole chapter to inquire whether *accidents in nature*, that is, rainbows, moonlight, sun-sets, clouds and storms, are the proper thing in the classical style of art.

Again, it is urged that this is not what is meant, *viz.*, to exclude different classes or characters of things, but that there is in each class or character a *middle point*, which is the point of perfection. What middle point? Or how is it ascertained? What is the middle age of childhood? Or are all children to be alike, dark or fair? Some of Titian's children have black hair, and others yellow or auburn: who can tell which is the most beautiful? May not a St John be older than an infant Christ? Must not a Magdalen be different from a Madonna, a Diana from a Venus? Or may not a Venus have more or less gravity, a Diana more or less sweetness? What then becomes of the abstract idea in any of these cases? It varies as it does in nature; that is, there is indeed a general principle or character to be adhered to, but modified everlastingly by various other given or nameless circumstances. The highest art, like nature, is a living spring of unconstrained excellence, and does not produce a continued repetition of itself, like plaster-casts from the same figure.

But once more it may be insisted that, in what relates to mere form or organic structure, there is necessarily a middle line or central point, anything short of which is deficiency, and anything beyond it excess, being the average form to which all the other forms included in the same species tend, and approximate more or less. Then this average form, as it exists in nature, should be taken as the model for art. What occasion to do it out of your own head, when you can bring it under the cognisance of your senses? Suppose a foot of a certain size and shape to be the standard of perfection, or if you will, the *mean proportion* between all other feet. How can you tell this so well as by seeing it? How can you copy it so well as by

having it actually before you? But, you will say, there are particular minute defects in the best-shaped actual foot which ought not to be transferred to the imitation. Be it so. But are there not also particular minute beauties in the best or even the worst shaped actual foot, which you will only discover by ocular inspection, which are reducible to no measurement or precepts, and which in finely-developed nature out-weigh the imperfections a thousand-fold, the proper general form being contained there also, and these being only the distinctly articulated parts of it, with their inflections, which no artist can carry in his head alone? For instance, in the bronze monument of Henry VII. and his wife, in Westminster Abbey, by the famous Torregiano, the fingers and finger-nails of the woman in particular are made out as minutely, and at the same time as beautifully, as it is possible to conceive; yet they have exactly the effect that a cast taken from a fine female hand would have, with every natural joint, muscle, and nerve in complete preservation. Does this take from the beauty or magnificence of the whole? No: it aggrandises it. What then does it take from? Nothing but the conceit of the artist that he can paint a hand out of his own head (that is, out of nothing, and by reducing it again as near as can be to nothing, to a mere vague image) that shall be better than anything in nature. A hand or foot is not *one thing* because it is *one word* or name; and the painter of mere abstractions had better lay down his pencil at once, and be contented to write the descriptions or titles under works of art.

Lastly, it may be objected that a whole figure can never be found perfect or equal; that the most beautiful arm will not belong to the same figure as the most beautiful leg, and so on. How is this to be remedied? By taking the arm from one, and the leg from the other, and clapping them both on the same body? That will never do; for however admirable in themselves they will hardly agree

together. One will have a different character from the other ; and they will form a sort of natural patchwork.

Or, to avoid this, will you take neither from actual models, but derive them from the neutralising medium of your own imagination ? Worse and worse. Copy them from the same model, the best in all its parts you can get ; so that, if you have to alter, you may alter as little as possible, and retain nearly the whole substance of nature. You may depend upon it that what is so retained will alone be of any specific value.* The rest may have a negative merit, but will be positively good for nothing. It will be to the vital truth and beauty of what is taken from the best nature, like the piecing of an antique statue. It fills a gap, but nothing more. It is, in fact, a mental blank.

2. This leads us to the second point laid down before, which was that *the highest art is the imitation of the finest nature, or, in other words, of that which conveys the strongest sense of pleasure or power, of the sublime or beautiful.*

The artist does not pretend to *invent* an absolutely new class of objects, without any foundation in nature. He does not spread his palette on the canvas, for the mere finery of the thing, and tell us that it makes a brighter show than the rainbow, or even than a bed of tulips. He does not draw airy forms, moving above the earth, “gay creatures of the element, that play i’ th’ plighted clouds,” and scorn the mere material existences, the concrete descendants of those that came out of Noah’s Ark, and that walk, run, or creep upon it. No, he does not paint only what he has seen *in his mind’s eye*, but the common objects that both he and others daily meet—rocks, clouds, trees, men, women, beasts, fishes, birds, or what he calls such. He is then an imitator by profession. He gives the appearances of things that exist outwardly by themselves,

* I believe this rule will apply to all except grotesques, which are evidently taken from opposite natures.

and have a distinct and independent nature of their own. But these know their own nature best ; and it is by consulting them that he can alone trace it truly, either in the immediate details or characteristic essences. Nature is consistent, unaffected, powerful, subtle : art is forgetful, apish, feeble, coarse. Nature is the original, and therefore right : art is the copy, and can but tread lamely in the same steps. Nature penetrates into the parts, and moves the whole mass : it acts with diversity, and in necessary connection ; for real causes never forget to operate, and to contribute their portion. Where therefore these causes are called into play to the utmost extent that they ever reach, there we shall have a strength and a refinement that art may imitate, but cannot surpass. But it is said that art can surpass this most perfect image in nature by combining others with it. What ! by joining to the most perfect in its kind something less perfect ? Go to—this argument will not pass. Suppose you have a goblet of the finest wine that ever was tasted ; you will not mend it by pouring into it all sorts of samples of an inferior quality. So the best in nature is the stint and limit of what is best in art : for art can only borrow from nature st II : and moreover must borrow entire objects ; for bits only make patches.

We defy any landscape-painter to invent out of his own head, and by jumbling together all the different forms of hills he ever saw, by adding a bit to one, and taking a bit from another, anything equal to Arthur's Seat, with the appendage of Salisbury Crags, that overlooks Edinburgh. Why so ? Because there are no levers in the mind of man equal to those with which nature works at her utmost need. No imagination can toss and tumble about huge heaps of earth as the ocean in its fury can. A volcano is more potent to rend rocks asunder than the most splashing pencil. The convulsions of nature can make a precipice more frightfully, or heave the backs of mountains more proudly, or throw their sides into waving lines more gracefully, than all the

beau idéal of art. For there is in nature not only greater power and scope but (so to speak) greater knowledge and unity of purpose. Art is comparatively weak and incongruous, being at once a miniature and caricature of nature. We grant that a tolerable sketch of Arthur's Seat, and the adjoining view, is better than Primrose Hill (our favourite Primrose Hill!), but no pencil can transform or dandle Primrose Hill into a thing of equal character and sublimity with Arthur's Seat—a concession which gives us some pain to make.

We do not recollect a more striking illustration of the difference between art and nature in this respect than Mr Martin's very singular and, in some things, very meritorious pictures. But he strives to outdo nature. He wants to give more than she does, or than his subject requires or admits. He sub-divides his groups into infinite littleness, and exaggerates his scenery into absolute immensity. His figures are like rows of shiny pins; his mountains are piled up one upon the back of the other, like the stories of houses. He has no notion of the moral principle in all art, that a part may be greater than the whole. He reckons that if one range of lofty square hills is good, another range above that with clouds between must be better. He thus wearies the imagination instead of exciting it. We see no end of the journey, and turn back in disgust. We are tired of the effort, we are tired of the monotony of this sort of reduplication of the same object. We were satisfied before; but it seems the painter was not, and we naturally sympathise with him. This craving after quantity is a morbid affection. A landscape is not an architectural elevation. You may build a house as high as you can lift up stones with pulleys and levers, but you cannot raise mountains into the sky merely with the pencil. They lose probability and effect by striving at too much; and with their ceaseless throes oppress the imagination of the spectator, and bury the artist's fame under them. The

only error of these pictures is that art here puts on her seven-league boots, and thinks it possible to steal a march upon nature. Mr Martin might make Arthur's Seat sublime, if he chose to take the thing as it is ; but he would be for squaring it according to the mould in his own imagination, and for clapping another Arthur's Seat on the top of it, to make the Calton Hill stare !

Again, with respect to the human figure. This has an internal structure—muscles, bones, blood-vessels, &c.—by means of which the external surface is operated upon according to certain laws. Does the artist, with all his generalisations, understand these as well as nature does ? Can he predict with all his learning that, if a certain muscle is drawn up in a particular manner, it will present a particular appearance in a different part of the arm or leg, or bring out other muscles, which were before hid, with certain modifications ? But in nature all this is brought about by necessary laws, and the effect is visible to those, and those only, who look for it in actual objects.

This is the great and master excellence of the ELGIN MARBLES, that they do not seem to be the outer surface of a hard and immovable block of marble, but to be actuated by an internal machinery, and composed of the same soft and flexible materials as the human body. The skin (or the outside) seems to be protruded or tightened by the natural action of a muscle beneath it. This result is miraculous in art ; in nature it is easy and unavoidable. That is to say, art has to imitate or produce certain effects or appearances without the natural causes ; but the human understanding can hardly be so true to those causes as the causes to themselves ; and hence the necessity (in this sort of *simulated creation*) of recurring at every step to the actual objects and appearances of nature.

Having shown so far how indispensable it is for art to identify itself with nature, in order to preserve the truth of imitation, without which it is destitute of value or meaning,

it may be said to follow as a necessary consequence, that the only way in which art can rise to greater dignity or excellence is by finding out models of greater dignity and excellence in nature. Will any one, looking at the Theseus for example, say that it could spring merely from the artist's brain, or that it could be done from a common, ill-made, or stunted body? The fact is that its superiority consists in this, that it is a perfect combination of art and nature, or an identical, and as it were spontaneous, copy of an individual picked out of a finer race of men than generally tread this ball of earth. Could it be made of a Dutchman's trunk-hose? No. Could it be made out of one of Sir Joshua's Discourses on the *middle form*? No. How then? Out of an eye, a head, and a hand, with sense, spirit, and energy to follow the finest nature, as it appeared exemplified in sweeping masses and in subtle details, without pedantry, conceit, cowardice, or affectation!

Some one was asking at Mr Haydon's one day, as a few persons were looking at the cast from this figure, why the original might not have been done as a cast from nature. Such a supposition would account at least for what seems otherwise unaccountable—the incredible labour and finishing bestowed on the back and other parts of this figure, placed at a prodigious height against the walls of a temple, where they could never be seen after they were once put up there. If they were done by means of a cast in the first instance, the thing appears intelligible, otherwise not. Our host stoutly resisted this imputation, which tended to deprive art of one of its greatest triumphs, and to make it as mechanical as a shaded profile. So far, so good. But the reason he gave was bad, *viz.*, that the limbs could not remain in those actions long enough to be cast. Yet surely this would take a shorter time than if the model sat to the sculptor; and we all agreed that nothing but actual, continued, and intense observation of living nature could give the solidity, complexity, and refinement of imita-

tion which we saw in the half-animated, almost-moving figure before us.* Be this as it may, the principle here stated does not reduce art to the imitation of what is understood by common or low life. It rises to any point of beauty or sublimity you please, but it rises only as nature rises exalted with it too. To hear these critics talk one would suppose there was nothing in the world really worth looking at. The Dutch pictures were the best that they could paint ; they had no other landscapes or faces before them. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* Yet who is not alarmed at a Venus by Rembrandt ? The Greek statues were (*cum grano salis*) Grecian youths and nymphs ; and the women in the streets of Rome (it has been remarked †) look to this hour as if they had walked out of Raffaello's pictures.

Nature is always truth ; at its best, it is beauty and sublimity as well ; though Sir Joshua tells us in one of the papers in the IDLER, that in itself, or with reference to individuals, it is a mere tissue of meanness and deformity. Luckily, the Elgin Marbles say No to that conclusion ; for they are decidedly *part and parcel thereof*. What constitutes fine nature we shall inquire under another head. But we would remark here, that it can hardly be the *middle form*, since this principle, however it might determine certain general proportions and outlines, could never be intelligible in the details of nature, or applicable to those of art. Who will say that the form of a finger nail is just midway between a thousand others that he has *not* remarked ; we are only struck with it when it is more than ordinarily beautiful, from symmetry, an oblong shape, &c. The staunch partisans of this theory, however, get over the difficulty here spoken of in practice, by omitting the details altogether, and making their works sketches, or rather what the French call *ébauches* and the English *draws*.

* Some one finely applied to the repose of this figure the words :

Sedet, in æternumque sedebit,

Infelix Theseus.

† By Mr Coleridge.

3. The IDEAL is only the selecting of a particular form which expresses most completely the idea of a given character or quality, as of beauty, strength, activity, voluptuousness, &c., and which preserves that character with the greatest consistency throughout.

Instead of its being true in general that the *ideal* is the *middle point*, it is to be found in the *extremes*; or, it is carrying any *idea* as far as it will go. Thus, for instance, a Silenus is as much an *ideal* thing as an Apollo, as to the principle on which it is done, *viz.*, giving to every feature and to the whole form the utmost degree of grossness and sensuality that can be imagined, with this exception (which has nothing to do with the understanding of the question), that the *ideal* means by custom this extreme on the side of the good and beautiful. With this reserve, the *ideal* means always the *something more* of anything which may be anticipated by the fancy, and which must be found in nature (by looking long enough for it) to be expressed as it ought. Suppose a good heavy Dutch face (we speak by the proverb)—this, you will say, is gross; but it is not gross enough. You have an idea of something grosser, that is, you have seen something grosser, and must seek for it again. When you meet with it, and have stamped it on the canvas, or carved it out of the block, this is the true *ideal*, namely, that which answers to and satisfies a pre-conceived idea; not that which is made out of an abstract idea and answers to nothing.

In the Silenus, also, according to the notion we have of the properties and character of that figure, there must be vivacity, slyness, wantonness, &c. Not only the image of the mind, but a real face, may express these combined together; another may express them more, and another most, which last is the *ideal*; and when the image in nature coalesces with, and gives a body, force, and reality to the idea in the mind, then it is that we see the true perfection of art. The forehead should be "villainous low;" the

eye-brows bent in ; the eyes small and gloating ; the nose *pugged*, and pointed at the end, with distended nostrils ; the mouth large and shut ; the cheeks swollen ; the neck thick, &c. There is, in all this process, nothing of softening down, of compromising qualities, of finding out a *mean proportion* between different forms and characters ; the sole object is to *intensify* each as much as possible. The only fear is "to o'erstep the modesty of nature" and run into caricature. This must be avoided ; but the artist is only to stop short of this. He must not outrage probability. We must have seen a class of such faces, or something so nearly approaching as to prevent the imagination from revolting against them. The forehead must be low, but not so low as to lose the character of humanity in the brute. It would thus lose all its force and meaning. For that which is extreme and ideal in one species is nothing, if, by being pushed too far, it is merged in another. Above all, there should be *keeping* in the whole and every part. In the Pan, the horns and goat's feet, perhaps, warrant the approach to a more *animal* expression than would otherwise be allowable in the human features ; but yet this tendency to excess must be restrained within certain limits. If Pan is made into a beast, he will cease to be a god ! Let Momus distend his jaws with laughter as far as laughter can stretch them, but no farther, or the expression will be that of pain and not of pleasure. Besides, overcharging the expression or action of any one feature will suspend the action of others. The whole face will no longer laugh. But this universal suffusion of broad mirth and humour over the countenance is very different from a placid smile, midway between grief and joy. Yet a classical Momus, by modern theories of the *ideal*, ought to be such a nonentity in expression. The ancients knew better. They pushed art into such subjects to the verge of "all we hate," while they felt the point beyond which it could not be urged with propriety, *i.e.*, with truth, consistency, and consequent effect.

There is no difference, in philosophical reasoning, between the mode of art here insisted on and the *ideal* regularity of such figures as the Apollo, the Hercules, the Mercury, the Venus, &c. All these are, as it were, *personifications, essences, abstractions* of certain qualities of virtue in human nature, not of human nature in general, which would make nonsense. Instead of being abstractions of all sorts of qualities jumbled together in a neutral character, they are in the opposite sense *abstractions* of some single quality or customary combination of qualities, leaving out all others as much as possible, and imbuing every part with that one predominant character to the utmost. The Apollo is a representation of graceful dignity and mental power ; the Hercules of bodily strength ; the Mercury of swiftness ; the Venus of female loveliness, and so on. In these, in the Apollo is surely implied and found more grace than usual ; in the Hercules more strength than usual ; in the Mercury more lightness than usual ; in the Venus more softness than usual. Is it not so ? What then becomes of the pretended *middle form* ? One would think it would be sufficient to prove this to ask, "Do not these statues differ from one another ? And is this difference a defect ?" It would be ridiculous to call them by different names, if they were not supposed to represent different and peculiar characters ; sculptors should, in that case, never carve anything but the statue of *a man*, the statue of *a woman*, &c., and this would be the name of perfection.

This theory of art is not at any rate justified by the history of art. An extraordinary quantity of bone and more muscle is as proper to the Hercules as his club, and it would be strange if the Goddess of Love had not a more delicately-rounded form and a more languishing look withal than the Goddess of Hunting. That a form combining and blending the properties of both, the downy softness of the one with the elastic buoyancy of the other, would be more perfect than either, we no more see than that grey is

the most perfect of colours. At any rate, this is the march neither of nature nor of art. It is not denied that these antique sculptures are models of the *ideal*; nay, it is on them that this theory boasts of being founded. Yet they give a flat contradiction to its insipid mediocrity. Perhaps some of them have a slight bias to the false *ideal*, to the smooth and uniform, or the negation of nature : any error on this side is, however, happily set right by the ELGIN MARBLES, which are the paragons of sculpture and the mould of form.

As the *ideal*, then, requires a difference of character in each figure as a whole so it expects the same character (or a corresponding one) to be stamped on each part of every figure. As the legs of a Diana should be more muscular and adapted for running than those of a Venus or a Minerva, so the skin of her face ought to be more tense, bent on her prey, and hardened by being exposed to the winds of heaven. The respective characters of lightness, softness, strength, &c., should pervade each part of the surface of each figure, but still varying according to the texture and functions of the individual part. This can only be learned or practised from the attentive observation of nature in those forms in which any given character or excellence is most strikingly displayed, and which has been selected for imitation and study on that account.

Suppose a dimple in the chin to be a mark of voluptuousness; then the Venus should have a dimple in the chin; and she has one. But this will imply certain correspondent indications in other parts of the features, about the corner of the mouth, and a gentle undulation and sinking in of the cheek, as if it had just been pinched, and so on : yet so as to be consistent with the other qualities of roundness, smoothness, &c., which belong to the idea of the character. Who will get all this and embody it out of the idea of a *middle form*, I cannot say : it may be, and has been, got out of the idea of a number of distinct, enchanting graces in the mind, and from some heavenly object unfolded to the sight!

4. *That the historical is nature in action. With regard to the face, it is expression.*

Hogarth's pictures are true history. Every feature, limb, figure, group is instinct with life and motion. He does not take a subject and place it in a position, like a lay figure, in which it stirs neither limb nor joint. The scene moves before you : the face is like a frame-work of flexible machinery. If the mouth is distorted with laughter, the eyes swim in laughter. If the forehead is knit together, the cheeks are puckered up. If a fellow squints most horribly, the rest of his face is awry. The muscles pull different ways, or the same way, at the same time, on the surface of the picture, as they do in the human body. What you see is the reverse of *still life*. There is a continual and complete action and reaction of one variable part upon another, as there is in the ELGIN MARBLES. If you pull the string of a bow, the bow itself is bent. So it is in the strings and wires that move the human frame. The action of any one part, the contraction or relaxation of any one muscle, extends more or less perceptibly to every other :

“Thrills in each nerve, and lives along the line.”

Thus the celebrated *Io* of Correggio is imbued, steeped, in a manner, in the same voluptuous feeling all over—the same passion languishes in her whole frame, and communicates the infection to the feet, the back, and the reclined position of the head. This is history, not carpenter's work. Some painters fancy that they paint history, if they get the measurement from the foot to the knee and put four bones, where there are four bones. This is not our idea of it ; but we think it is to show how one part of the body sways another in action and in passion. The last relates chiefly to the expression of the face, though not altogether. Passion may be shown in a clenched fist as well as in clenched teeth. The face, however, is the throne of expression. Character implies the feeling, which is fixed and permanent ; expression, that which is occasional and

momentary, at least technically speaking. Portrait treats of objects as they are ; history of the events and changes to which they are liable. And so far history has a double superiority, or a double difficulty to overcome, *viz.*, in the rapid glance over a number of parts subject to the simultaneous action of the same law, and in the scope of feeling required to sympathise with the critical and powerful movements of passion. It requires greater capacity of muscular motion to follow the progress of a carriage in violent motion than to lean upon it standing still. If to describe passion it were merely necessary to observe its outward effects, these perhaps, in the prominent points, become more visible and more tangible as the passion is more intense. But it is not only necessary to see the effects, but to discern the cause, in order to make the one true to the other. No painter gives more of intellectual or impassioned appearances than he understands or feels. It is an axiom in painting that sympathy is indispensable to truth of expression. Without it you get only caricatures, which are not the thing. But to sympathise with passion a greater fund of sensibility is demanded in proportion to the strength or tenderness of the passion. And as he feels most of this whose face expresses most passion, so he also feels most by sympathy whose hand can describe most passion. This amounts nearly, we take it, to a demonstration of an old and very disputed point. The same reasoning might be applied to poetry, but this is not the place.

Again, it is easier to paint a portrait than an historical face, because the head *sits* for the first, but the expression will hardly *sit* for the last. Perhaps those passions are the best subjects for painting the expression of which may be retained for some time, so as to be better caught, which throw out a sort of lambent fire, and leave a reflected glory behind them, as we see in Madonnas, Christ's heads, and what is understood by sacred subjects in general. The violences of human passion are too soon over to be copied by the

hand, and the mere conception of the internal workings is not here sufficient, as it is in poetry. A portrait is to history what still life is to portraiture: that is, the whole remains the same while you are doing it; or, while you are occupied about each part, the rest wait for you. Yet, what a difference is there between taking an original portrait and making a copy of one! This shows that the face, in its most ordinary state is continually varying and in action. So much of history is there in portrait! No one should pronounce definitively on the superiority of history over portrait without recollecting Titian's heads. The finest of them are very nearly (say quite) equal to the finest of Raffaele's. They have almost the look of *still life*, yet each part is decidedly influenced by the rest. Everything is *relative* in them. You cannot put any other eye, nose, lip in the same face. As is one part, so is the rest. You cannot fix on any particular beauty; the charm is in the whole. They have least action and the most expression of any portraits. They are doing nothing, and yet all other business seems insipid in comparison of their thoughts. They are silent, retired, and do not court observation: yet you cannot keep your eyes from them. Some one said that you would be as cautious of your behaviour in a room where a picture of Titian's was hung as if there was somebody by—so entirely do they look you through. They are the least tiresome *furniture-company* in the world!

5. *Grandeur consists in connecting a number of parts into a whole, and not leaving out the parts.*

Sir Joshua lays it down that the great style in art consists in the omission of the details. A greater error never man committed. The great style consists in preserving the masses and general proportions; not in omitting the details. Thus suppose, for illustration's sake, the general form of an eye-brow to be commanding and grand. It is of a certain size, and arched in a particular curve. Now surely this general form or outline will be equally preserved

whether the painter daubs it in in a bold, rough way, as Reynolds or perhaps Rembrandt would, or produces the effect by a number of hair-lines arranged in the same form as Titian sometimes did, and in his best pictures. It will not be denied (for it cannot) that the characteristic form of the eye-brow would be the same, or that the effect of the picture at a small distance would be nearly the same in either case; only in the latter it would be rather more perfect, as being more like nature. Suppose a strong light to fall on one side of a face, and a deep shadow to involve the whole of the other. This would produce two distinct and large masses in the picture; which answers to the conditions of what is called the grand style of composition. Well, would it destroy these masses to give the smallest veins or variation of colour or surface in the light side, or to shade the other with the most delicate and elaborate *chiaroscuro*? It is evident not; from common sense, from the practice of the best masters, and, lastly, from the example of nature, which contains both the larger masses, the strongest contrasts, and the highest finishing within itself. The integrity of the whole, then, is not impaired by the indefinite subdivision and smallness of the parts. The grandeur of the ultimate effects depends entirely on the arrangement of these in a certain form or under certain masses. The Ilissus, or River god, is floating in his proper element, and is in appearance as firm as a rock, as pliable as a wave of the sea. The artist's breath might be said to mould and play upon the undulating surface. The whole is expanded into noble proportions, and heaves with general effect. What then? Are the parts unfinished; or are they not there? No; they are there with the nicest exactness, but in due subordination; that is, they are there as they are found in fine nature, and float upon the general form, like straw or weeds upon the tide of ocean. Once more: in Titian's portraits we perceive a certain character stamped upon the different features. In the Hippolito de Medici the eye-brows

are angular, the nose is peaked, the mouth has sharp corners, the face is (so to speak) a pointed oval. The drawing in each of these is as careful and distinct as can be. But the unity of intention in nature, and in the artist, does not the less tend to produce a general grandeur and impressiveness of effect ; which at first sight it is not easy to account for. To combine a number of particulars to one end is not to omit them altogether, and is the best way of producing the grand style, because it does this without either affectation or slovenliness.

6. The sixth rule we proposed to lay down was that, *as grandeur is the principle of connection between different parts, beauty is the principle of affinity between different forms, on their gradual conversion into each other. The one harmonises, the other aggrandises, our impressions of things.*

There is a harmony of colours and a harmony of sounds, unquestionably : why then there should be all this squeamishness about admitting an original harmony of forms as the principle of beauty and source of pleasure there, we cannot understand. It is true that there is in organised bodies a certain standard of form to which they approximate more or less, and from which they cannot very widely deviate without shocking the sense of custom, or our settled expectations of what they ought to be. And hence it has been pretended that there is in all such cases a *middle central form*, obtained by leaving out the peculiarities of all the others, which alone is the pure standard of truth and beauty. A conformity to custom is, we grant, one condition of beauty or source of satisfaction to the eye, because an abrupt transition shocks ; but there is a conformity (or correspondence) of colours, sounds, lines among themselves, which is soft and pleasing for the same reason. The average or customary form merely determines what is *natural*. A thing cannot please, unless it is to be found in nature ; but that which is natural is most pleasing, according as it has other properties which in themselves please. Thus the

colour of a cheek must be the natural complexion of a human face—it would not do to make it the colour of a flower or a precious stone ; but among complexions ordinarily to be found in nature, that is most beautiful which would be thought so abstractedly or in itself. Yellow hair is not the most common, nor is it a *mean proportion* between the different colours of women's hair. Yet, who will say that it is not the most beautiful ? Blue or green hair would be a defect and an anomaly, not because it is not the *medium* of nature, but because it is not in nature at all. To say that there is no difference in the sense of form except from custom, is like saying that there is no difference in the sensation of smooth or rough. Judging by analogy, a gradation or symmetry of form must affect the mind in the same manner as a gradation of recurrence, at given intervals, of tones or sounds ; and if it does so in fact, we need not inquire further for the principle. Sir Joshua (who is the arch-heretic on this subject) makes grandeur or sublimity consist in the middle form, or abstraction of all peculiarities ; which is evidently false, for grandeur and sublimity arise from extraordinary strength, magnitude, &c., or, in a word, from an excess of power, so as to startle and overawe the mind. But as sublimity is an excess of power, beauty is, we conceive, the blending and harmonising of different powers or qualities together, so as to produce a soft and pleasurable sensation. That it is not the middle form of the species, seems proved in various ways. First, because one species is more beautiful than another, according to common sense. A rose is the queen of flowers, in poetry at least ; but in this philosophy any other flower is as good. A swan is more beautiful than a goose, a stag than a goat. Yet if custom were the test of beauty, either we should give no preference, or our preference would be reversed. Again, let us go back to the human face and figure. A straight nose is allowed to be handsome, that is, one that presents nearly a continuation of the line of the forehead, and the

sides of which are nearly parallel. Now this cannot be the mean proportion of the form of noses. For first, most noses are broader at the bottom than at the top, inclining to the negro head, but none are broader at the top than at the bottom, to produce the Greek form as a balance between both. Almost all noses sink in immediately under the forehead bone, none ever project there ; so that the nearly straight line continued from the forehead cannot be a mean proportion struck between the two extremes of convex and concave form in this feature of the face. There must, therefore, be some other principle of symmetry, continuity, &c., to account for the variation from the prescribed rule. Once more (not to multiply instances tediously), a double calf is undoubtedly the perfection of beauty in the form of the leg. But this is a rare thing. Nor is it the medium between two common extremes. For the muscles seldom swell enough to produce this excrescence, if it may be so called, and never run to an excess there so as, by diminishing the quantity, to subside into proportion and beauty. But this second or lower calf is a connecting link between the upper calf and the small of the leg, and is just like a second chord or half-note in music. We conceive that any one who does not perceive the beauty of the Venus de Medicis, for instance, in this respect has not the proper perception of form in his mind. As this is the most disputable, or at least the most disputed, part of our theory, we may, perhaps, have to recur to it again, and shall leave an opening for that purpose.

7. *That grace is the beautiful or harmonious in what relates to position or motion.*

There needs not much be said on this point, as we apprehend it will be granted that, whatever beauty is as to the form, grace is the same thing in relation to the use that is made of it. Grace in writing relates to the transitions that are made from one subject to another, or to the movement that is given to a passage. If one thing leads to

another, or an idea or illustration is brought in without effect, or without making a *boggle* in the mind, we call this a graceful style. Transitions must in general be gradual and pieced together. But sometimes the most violent are the most graceful, when the mind is fairly tired out and exhausted with a subject, and is glad to leap to another as a repose and relief from the first. Of these there are frequent instances in Mr Burke's writings, which have something Pindaric in them. That which is not beautiful in itself or in the mere form, may be made so by position or motion. A figure by no means elegant may be put in an elegant position. Mr Kean's figure is not good; yet we have seen him throw himself into attitudes of infinite spirit, dignity, and grace. John Kemble's figure, on the contrary, is fine in itself; and he has only to show himself to be admired. The direction in which anything is moved has evidently nothing to do with the shape of the thing moved. The one may be a circle and the other a square. Little and deformed people seem to be well aware of this distinction, who, in spite of their unpromising appearance, usually assume the most imposing attitudes and give themselves the most extraordinary airs imaginable.

8. *Grandeur of motion is unity of motion.*

This principle hardly needs illustration. Awkwardness is contradictory or disjointed motion.

9. *Strength in art is giving the extremes, softness the uniting them.*

There is no incompatibility between strength and softness: it is sometimes supposed by frivolous people. Weakness is not refinement. A shadow may be twice as deep in a finely coloured picture as in another, and yet almost imperceptible, from the gradations that lead to it and blend it with the light. Correggio had prodigious strength and greater softness. Nature is strong and soft beyond the reach of art to imitate. Softness, then, does not imply the absence of considerable extremes, but it is interposing

a third thing between them, to break the force of the contrast. Guido is more soft than strong. Rembrandt is more strong than soft.

10. And lastly. *That truth is, to a certain degree, beauty and grandeur, since all things are connected, and all things modify one another in nature. Simplicity is also grand and beautiful for the same reason. Elegance is ease and lightness, with precision.*

This last head appears to contain a number of *gratis dicta*, got together for the sake of completing a decade of propositions. They have, however, some show of truth, and we should add little clearness to them by any reasoning upon the matter.

THE VATICAN.*

L.† The Vatican did not quite answer your expectation ?

H. To say the truth, it was not such a blow as the Louvre ; but then it came after it, and what is more, at the distance of twenty years. To have made the same impression, it should have been twenty times as fine ; though that was scarcely possible, since all that there is fine in the Vatican, in Italy, or in the world, was in the Louvre when I first saw it, except the frescoes of Raffaele and Michael Angelo, which could not be transported, without taking the walls of the building, across the Alps.

L. And what, may I ask (for I am curious to hear), did you think of these same frescoes ?

H. Much the same as before I saw them. As far as I could judge, they are very like the prints. I do not think the spectator's idea of them is enhanced beyond this. The Raffaelles, of which you have a distinct and admirable view, are somewhat faded—I do not mean in colour, but the outline is injured—and the “ Sibyls and Prophets ” in the Sistine Chapel are painted on the ceiling at too great a height for the eye to distinguish the faces as accurately as one would wish. The features and expressions of the figures near the bottom of the “ Last Judgment ” are sufficiently plain, and horrible enough they are.

L. What was your opinion of the “ Last Judgment ” itself ?

H. It is literally too big to be seen. It is like an immense

* This Essay has been already printed in the *Literary Remains*, 1836, ii. 421.—Ed.

† Quercy, Lambor.—Ed.

field of battle or charnel house, strewed with carcases and naked bodies : or it is a shambles of art. You have huge limbs apparently torn from their bodies and stuck against the wall : anatomical dissections, backs, and diaphragms, tumbling "with hideous ruin and combustion down," neither intelligible groups nor perspective nor colour ; you distinguish the principal figure, that of Christ, only from its standing in the centre of the picture, on a sort of island of earth, separated from the rest of the subject by an inlet of sky. The whole is a scene of enormous, ghastly confusion, in which you can only make out quantity and number, and vast uncouth masses of bones and muscles. It has the incoherence and distortion of a troubled dream without the shadowiness ; everything is here corporeal and of solid dimensions.

L. But surely there must be something fine in the "Sibyls and Prophets" from the copies we have of them ; justifying the high encomiums of Sir Joshua Reynolds and of so many others ?

II. It appears to me that nothing can be finer as to form, attitude, and outline. The whole conception is so far inimitably noble and just ; and all that is felt as wanting is a proportionable degree of expression in the countenances, though of this I am not sure, for the height (as I said before) baffles a nice scrutiny. They look to me unfinished, vague, and general. Like some fabulous figure from the antique the heads were brutal, the bodies divine. Or at most, the faces were only continuations of and on a par with the physical form, large and bold, and with great breadth of drawing, but no more the seat of a vivifying spirit, or with a more powerful and marked intelligence emanating from them, than from the rest of the limbs, the hands, or even drapery. The filling up of the mind is, I suspect, wanting—the *divinæ particula auræ* ; there is prodigious and mighty prominence, and grandeur, and simplicity in the features, but they are not surcharged

with meaning, with thought or passion, like Raffaele's, "the rapt soul sitting in the eyes." On the contrary, they seem only to be half-informed, and might be almost thought asleep. They are fine moulds, and contain a capacity of expression, but are not bursting, teeming with it. The outward material shrine, or tabernacle, is unexceptionable; but there is not superadded to it a revelation of the workings of the mind within. The forms in Michael Angelo are objects to admire in themselves: those of Raffaele are merely a language pointing to something beyond, and full of this ultimate import.

L. But does not the difference arise from the nature of the subjects?

H. I should think not. Surely, a Sibyl in the height of her phrensy, or an inspired Prophet—"seer blest"—in the act of receiving or of announcing the will of the Almighty, is not a less fit subject for the most exalted and impassioned expression than an Apostle, a Pope, a Saint, or a common man. If you say that these persons are not represented in the act of inspired communication but in their ordinary quiescent state—granted; but such preternatural workings, as well as the character and frame of mind proper for them, must leave their shadowings and lofty traces behind them. The face that has once held communion with the Most High, or been wrought to madness by deep thought and passion, or that inly broods over its sacred or its magic lore, must be "as a book where one may read strange matters," that cannot be opened without a correspondent awe and reverence. But here is "neither the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night:" neither the blaze of immediate inspiration nor the hallowed radiance, the mystic gloomy light that follows it, so far as I was able to perceive. I think it idle to say that Michael Angelo painted man in the abstract, and so left expression indeterminate, when he painted prophets and other given characters in particular. He has painted

them on a larger scale and cast their limbs in a gigantic mould to give a dignity and command answering to their situations and high calling, but I do not see the same high character and intensity of thought or purpose impressed upon their countenances. Thus nothing can be nobler or more characteristic than the figure of the prophet Jeremiah. It is not abstracted, but symbolical of the history and functions of the individual. The whole figure bends and droops under a weight of woe, like a large willow tree surcharged with showers. Yet there is no peculiar expression of grief in one part more than another; the head hangs down despondingly indeed, but so do the hands, the clothes; every part seems to labour under and be involved in a complication of distress. Again, the prophet Ezra is represented reading in a striking attitude of attention, and with the book held close to him as if to lose no part of its contents in empty space—all this is finely imagined and designed, but then the book reflects back none of its pregnant, hieroglyphic meaning on the face which, though large and stately, is an ordinary, unimpassioned, and even unideal one. Daniel, again, is meant for a face of inward thought and musing, but it might seem as if the compression of the features were produced by external force as much as by involuntary perplexity. I might extend these remarks to this artist's other works; for instance, to the Moses, of which the form and attitude express the utmost dignity and energy of purpose, but the face wants a something of the intelligence and expansive views of the Hebrew legislator. It is cut from the same block and by the same bold sweeping hand as the sandals or the drapery.

I. Do you think there is any truth or value in the distinction which assigns to Raffaele the dramatic and to Michael Angelo the epic department of the art?

II. Very little, I confess. It is so far true, that Michael Angelo painted single figures and Raffaele chiefly groups;

but Michael Angelo gave life and action to his figures, though not the same expression to the face. I think this arose from two circumstances. First, from his habits as a sculptor, in which form predominates, and in which the fixed lineaments are more attended to than the passing inflections, which are neither so easily caught nor so well given in sculpture as in painting. Secondly, it strikes me that Michael Angelo, who was a strong, iron-built man, sympathised more with the organic structure, with bones and muscles, than with the more subtle and sensitive workings of that fine medullary substance called the brain. He compounded man admirably of brass or clay, but did not succeed equally in breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, of thought or feeling. He has less humanity than Raffaele, and I think that he is also less divine, unless it be asserted that the body is less allied to earth than the mind. Expression is, after all, the principal thing. If Michael Angelo's forms have, as I allow, an intellectual character about them and a greatness of gusto, so that you would almost say "his bodies thought," his faces on the other hand have a drossy and material one. For example, in the figure of Adam coming from the hand of his Creator, the composition, which goes on the idea of a being starting into life at the touch of Omnipotence, is sublime—the figure of Adam, reclined at ease with manly freedom and independence, is worthy of the original founder of our race; and the expression of the face, implying passive resignation and the first consciousness of existence, is in thorough keeping—but I see nothing in the countenance of the Deity denoting supreme might and majesty. The Eve, too, lying extended at the foot of the Forbidden Tree, has an elasticity and buoyancy about it that seems as if it could bound up from the earth of its own accord, like a bow that has been bent. It is all life and grace. The action of the head thrown back and the upward look correspond to the rest. The artist was here at home. In

like manner, in the allegorical figures of Night and Morn at Florence, the faces are ugly or distorted, but the contour and actions of the limbs express dignity and power in the very highest degree. The legs of the figure of Night, in particular, are twisted into the involutions of a serpent's folds; the neck is curved like the horse's, and is clothed with thunder.

L. What, then, is the precise difference between him and Raffaele, according to your conception?

H. As far as I can explain the matter, it seems to me that Michael Angelo's forms are finer, but that Raffaele's are more fraught with meaning; that the rigid outline and disposable masses in the first are more grand and imposing, but that Raffaele puts a greater proportion of sentiment into his, and calls into play every faculty of mind and body of which his characters are susceptible, with greater subtilty and intensity of feeling. Dryden's lines—

“ A fiery soul that, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay ”—

do not exactly answer to Raffaele's character, which is mild and thoughtful rather than fiery; nor is there any want either of grace or grandeur in his figures: but the passage describes the “o'er-informing” spirit that breathes through them, and the unequal struggle of the expression to vent itself by more than ordinary physical means. Raffaele lived a much shorter time than Michael Angelo, who also lived long after him; and there is no comparison between the number, the variety, or the finished elegance of their works.* Michael Angelo possibly lost himself in the material and instrumental part of art, in embodying a technical theory, or in acquiring the grammar of different branches of study, excelling in knowledge and

* The oil-pictures attributed to Michael Angelo are meagre and pitiful; such as that of the “Fates at Florence.” Another of “Witches,” at Cardinal Fesch's at Rome, is like what the late Mr Barry would have admired and imitated—dingy, coarse, and vacant.

in gravity of pretension ; whereas Raffaello gave himself up to the diviner or lovelier impulse that breathes its soul over the face of things, being governed by a sense of reality and of general truth. There is nothing exclusive or repulsive in Raffaello ; he is open to all impressions alike, and seems to identify himself with whatever he saw, that arrested his attention or could interest others. Michael Angelo studied for himself, and raised objects to the standard of his conception by a *formula* or system ; Raffaello invented for others, and was guided only by sympathy with them. Michael Angelo was painter, sculptor, architect, but he might be said to make of each art a shrine in which to build up the stately and gigantic stature of his mind ; Raffaello was only a painter, but in that one art he seemed to pour out all the treasures and various excellence of nature, grandeur and scope of design, exquisite finishing, force, grace, delicacy, the strength of man, the softness of woman, the playfulness of infancy, thought, feeling, invention, imitation, labour, ease, and every quality that can distinguish a picture, except colour. Michael Angelo, in a word, stamped his own character on his works, or recast Nature in a mould of his own, leaving out much that was excellent ; Raffaello received his inspiration from without, and his genius caught the lambent flame of grace, of truth, and grandeur, which are reflected in his works with a light clear, transparent, and unfading.

L. Will you mention one or two things that particularly struck you ?

II. There is a figure of a man leading a horse in the "Atrilla," which I think peculiarly characteristic. It is an ordinary face and figure, in a somewhat awkward dress ; but he seems as if he had literally walked into the picture at that instant ; he is looking forward with a mixture of earnestness and curiosity, as if the scene were passing before him, and every part of his figure and dress is flexible and in motion, pliant to the painter's plastic touch. This

figure, so unconstrained and free, animated, salient, put me in mind, compared with the usual stiffness and shackles of the art, of chain-armour used by the knights of old instead of coat-of-mail. Raffaele's fresco figures seem the least of all others taken from plaster-casts; this is more than can be said of Michael Angelo's, which might be taken from, or would serve for, very noble ones. The horses in the same picture also delight me. Though dumb they appear as though they could speak, and were privy to the import of the scene. Their inflated nostrils and speckled skins are like a kind of proud flesh; or they are animals spiritualised. In the "Miracle of Bolsano" is that group of children, round-faced, smiling, with large-orbed eyes, like infancy nestling in the arms of affection; the studied elegance of the choir of tender novices, with all their sense of the godliness of their function and the beauty of holiness; and the hard, liny, individual portraits of priests and cardinals on the right hand, which have the same life, spirit, boldness, and marked character as if you could have looked in upon the assembled conclave. Neither painting nor popery ever produced anything finer. There is the utmost hardness and materiality of outline, with a spirit of fire. The school of Athens is full of striking parts and ingenious contrasts; but I prefer to it the "Convocation of Saints," with that noble circle of Prophets and Apostles in the sky, on whose bent foreheads and down-cast eyes you see written the City of the Blest, the beatific presence of the Most High, and the Glory hereafter to be revealed, a solemn brightness and a fearful dream, and that scarce less-inspired circle of sages canonised here on earth, poets, heroes, and philosophers, with the painter himself entering on one side like the recording angel, smiling in youthful beauty, and scarce conscious of the scene he has embodied. If there is a failure in any of these frescoes, it is I think, in the "Parnassus," in which there is something quaint and affected. In the "St Peter

delivered from Prison" he has burst with Rembrandt into the dark chambers of night, and thrown a glory round them. In the story of "Cupid and Psyche," at the Little Farnese, he has, I think, even surpassed himself in a certain swelling and voluptuous grace, as if beauty grew and ripened under his touch, and the very genius of ancient fable hovered over his enamoured pencil.

L. I believe you when you praise, not always when you condemn. Was there anything else that you saw to give you a higher idea of him than the specimens we have in this country?

H. Nothing superior to the Cartoons for boldness of design and execution; but I think his best oil pictures are abroad, though I had seen most of them before in the Louvre. I had not, however, seen the "Crowning of the Virgin," which is in the picture-gallery of the Vatican, and appears to me one of his very highest-wrought pictures. The Virgin in the clouds is of an admirable sedateness and dignity, and over the throng of breathing faces below there is poured a stream of joy and fervid devotion that can be compared to nothing but the golden light that evening skies pour on the edges of the surging waves. "Hope elevates, and joy brightens their every feature." The Foligno Virgin was at Paris, in which I cannot say I am quite satisfied with the Madonna; it has rather a *précieuse* expression; but I know not enough how to admire the innumerable heads of cherubs surrounding her, touched in with such care and delicacy, yet so as scarcely to be perceptible except on close inspection, nor that figure of the winged cherub below, offering the casket, and with his round, chubby face and limbs as full of rosy health and joy as the cup is full of the juice of the purple vine. There is another picture of his I will mention, the Leo X. in the Palace Pitti, "on his front engraven thought and public care;" and again, that little portrait in a cap in the Louvre, muffled in thought and buried in a kind of mental

chiaroscuro. When I think of these and so many other of his inimitable works, "scattered like stray-gifts o'er the earth," meeting our thoughts half-way, and yet carrying them further than we should have been able of ourselves, enriching, refining, exalting all around, I am at a loss to find motives for equal admiration or gratitude in what Michael Angelo has left, though his Prophets and Sibyls on the walls of the Sistine Chapel are *thumping make-weights* thrown into the opposite scale. It is nearly impossible to weigh or measure their different merits. Perhaps Michael Angelo's works, in their vastness and unity, may give a greater blow to some imaginations and lift the mind more out of itself, though accompanied with less delight or food for reflection, resembling the rocky precipice, whose "stately height, though bare," overlooks the various excellence and beauty of subjected art.

L. I do not think your premises warrant your conclusion. If what you have said of each is true, I should give the undoubted preference to Raffaele, as at least the greater painter if not the greater man. I must prefer the finest face to the largest mask.

H. I wish you could see and judge for yourself.

L. I pry'thee do not mock me. Proceed with your account. Was there nothing else worth mentioning after Raffaele and Michael Angelo?

H. So much that it has slipped from my memory. There are the finest statues in the world there, and they are scattered and put into niches or separate little rooms for effect, and not congregated together like a meeting of the marble gods of mythology, as was the case in the Louvre. There are some of Canova's, worked up to a high pitch of perfection, which might just as well have been left alone—and there are none, I think, equal to the Elgin Marbles. A bath of one of the Antonines, of solid porphyry, and as large as a good-sized room, struck me as the strongest proof of ancient magnificence. The busts are

innumerable, inimitable, have a breathing clearness and transparency, revive ancient history, and are very like actual English heads and characters. The inscriptions alone on fragments of antique marble would furnish years of study to the curious or learned in that way. The vases are most elegant—of proportions and materials unrivalled in taste and value. There are some tapestry copies of the Cartoons very glaring and unpleasant to look at. The room containing the coloured maps of Italy, done about three hundred years ago, is one of the longest and most striking; and the passing through it, with the green hillocks, rivers, and mountains on its spotty sides, is like going a delightful and various journey. You recall or anticipate the most interesting scenes and objects. Out of the windows of these long, straggling galleries, you look down into a labyrinth of inner and of outer courts, or catch the Dome of St Peter's adjoining (like a huge shadow), or gaze at the distant amphitheatre of hills surrounding the Sacred City, which excite a pleasing awe, whether considered as the haunts of banditti or from a recollection of the wondrous scene, the hallowed spot, on which they have overlooked for ages Imperial or Papal Rome, or her commonwealth more august than either. Here also, in one chamber of the Vatican, is a room stuffed full of artists, copying the Transfiguration, or the St Jerome of Domenichino, spitting, shrugging, and taking snuff, admiring their own performances and sneering at those of their neighbours; and on certain days of the week the whole range of the rooms is thrown open without reserve to the entire population of Rome and its environs, priests and peasants, with heads not unlike those that gleam from the walls, perfect in expression and in costume, and young peasant girls in clouted shoes, with looks of pleasure, timidity, and wonder, such as those with which Raffaele himself, from the portraits of him, might be supposed to have hailed the dawn of heaven-born art. There is also (to mention small

works with great) a portrait of George the Fourth in his robes (a present to his Holiness), turned into an outer room; and a tablet erected by him in St Peter's to the memory of James III. Would you believe it? Cosmo Comyne Bradwardine, when he saw the averted looks of the good people of England as they proclaimed his Majesty James III. in any of the towns through which they passed, would not have believed it. Fergus MacIvor, when in answer to the crier of the court, who repeated, "Long live King George!" he retorted, "Long live King James!" would not have believed it possible!

L. Hang your politics.

II. Never mind, if they do not hang me.

ENGLISH STUDENTS AT ROME.

"Nowher so besy a man as he ther n'as,
And yit he semed besier than he was."

—*Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.*

ROME is of all places the worst to study in, for the same reason that it is the best to lounge in. There is no end of objects to divert and distract the mind. If a person has no other view than to pass away his time, to fill his portfolio or commonplace book, or to improve his general taste and knowledge, he may find employment and amusement here for ever : if ever he wishes to do anything, he should fly from it as he would from the plague. There is a species of malaria hanging over it which infects both the mind and the body. It has been the seat of too much activity and luxury formerly, not to have produced a correspondent torpor and stagnation (both in the physical and moral world) as the natural consequence at present. If necessity is the mother of invention, it must be stifled in the birth here, where everything is already done and provided to your hand that you could possibly wish for, or think of. You have no stimulus to exertion, for you have but to open your eyes and see, in order to live in a continued round of delight and admiration. The doors of a splendid banquet of all that is rare and rich in Art stand ready open to you, you are invited to enter in and feast your senses and your imagination gratis ; and it is not likely that, under these circumstances, you will try to earn a scanty meal by hard labour, or even to gain an appetite by wholesome exercise. The same thing occurs here that is objected to by the inhabitants of great cities in general : they have too many objects always passing before

them, that engage their attention and fill up their time, to allow them either much leisure or inclination for thought or study. Rome is the great metropolis of art ; and it is somewhat to be feared that those who take up their abode there will become, like other cockneys, ignorant, conceited and superficial.

The queen and mistress of the ancient and the modern world claims such a transcendent superiority over the mind, that you look down as it were from this eminence on the rest of mankind ; and from the contempt you feel for others, come to have a mighty good opinion of yourself. The being at Rome (both from the sound of the name and the monuments of genius and magnificence she has to show) is of itself a sufficient distinction without doing anything there. After viewing some splendid relic of antiquity, the efforts of contemporary art sink into insignificance and nothingness : but we are disposed to occupy the vacant space, the clear ground thus created, with our own puny pretensions and aspiring fancies. As this indulgence of alternate enthusiasm and reflected self-complacency is a never-failing source of gratification, and a much less laborious one than the embodying our vain imaginations in practice, we easily rest in the means as the end ; and without making any farther progress, are perfectly satisfied with what others have done, and what we are to do. We indeed wear the livery, and follow in the train of greatness, and, like other livery-servants, despise the rabble, growing more lazy, affected, luxurious, insolent, trifling, and incapable of gaining an honest livelihood every hour. We are the dupes of flattering appearances and of false comparisons between ourselves and others. We think that a familiarity with great names and great works is an approach to an equality with them ; or fondly proceed to establish our own pretensions on the ruins of others, not considering that if it were not what we do, but what we see, that is the standard of proficiency, thousands of spectators might give themselves

the same airs of self-importance on the same idle score, and treat us as barbarians and poor creatures, if they had our impertinence and presumption. We stand before a picture of some great master, and fancy there is nothing between him and us : we walk under the dome of St Peter's, and it seems to grow larger with a consciousness of our presence and with the amplitude of our conceptions. All this is fine as well as easy work ; nor can it be supposed that we shall be in any haste to exchange this waking dream for the drudgery of mechanical exertion, or for the mortifying evidence of the disparity between our theory and our practice. All the great names and schools of art stand proxy for us till we choose to take the responsibility on our own shoulders ; and as it happens in other cases, we have no objection to make our faith in the merits of others a convenient substitute for good works and zealous exertions in the cause. Yet a common stone-mason or sign-painter, who understands the use of his tools and sticks close to his business, has more resemblance to Raffaele or Michael Angelo, and stands a better chance of achieving something great, than those who visit the corridors of the Vatican or St Peter's once a day, return home, spend the evening in extolling what they have witnessed, begin a sketch or a plan, and lay it aside, and saunter out again the next day in search of fresh objects to dissipate *vanità* and kill the time without being obliged to draw for one instant on their own resources or resolution. Numberless are the instances of those who go on thus, while vanity and indolence together are confirmed into an incurable disease, the sleek, pampered tongue of which they mistake for the marks of taste and genius. What other result can be expected ? If they do anything, it is all over with them. They not only strip off the mask from their own self-love, but expose themselves to the pity and derision of their competitors, whom they before affected to despise. Within "the vast, the unbounded " circle of pretension, of vapouring, and innuendo, they are safe : the future would be

Raffaelles, Correggios, &c., have nothing to dread from criticism while they hatch their embryo conquests and prepare a distant triumph : no one can apply Ithuriel's spear to detect what is confessedly a shadow. But they must waive this privilege when they descend into the common lists ; and in proportion as they have committed themselves in conversation or in idle fancy, they are ashamed to commit themselves in reality, because anything they could do at first must unavoidably fall short of that high standard of excellence, which (if at all) can only be attained by the labour and experience of a whole life. Their real incapacity shrinks from the pomp of their professions. The magnificence of the air-drawn edifice of their reputation prevents them from laying the first stone in downright earnest ; and they have no other mode of excusing the delay and the indecision it betokens, than by assuming still greater delicacy of taste and loftiness of ambition, and by thus aggrandising their unfounded schemes, rendering their execution more hopeless and impossible. Should they begin something, a new thought strikes them, and they throw aside a very promising sketch to enlarge their canvas, and proceed upon a scale more worthy of them. To this enlarged design some object is indispensably necessary, which is unluckily wanting ; thus time is gained, a new lease of credit is granted, and instead of putting the last hand to the original sketch, they take merit to themselves for the enlargement of their views and the determined pursuit of the higher walk of art. Meantime, the smaller picture stands unfinished on the easel, and nominal commissions pour in for new and more extended projects. Then comes a new secret of colouring, a new principle of grouping, a new theory, a new book—always something to draw off the attention from its proper object, and to substitute laborious idleness for true pains and profitable study. Then a picture is to be copied as a preparation for undertaking a given subject, or a library to be ransacked to ascertain the pre-

cise truth of the historical facts or the exact conception of the characters; and after a year thus lost in desultory and scrupulous researches, the whole plan is given up, either because no one comes forward effectually to patronise it, or because some more tempting prospect is opened into the realms of art and high renown. Then again friends are to be consulted; some admire one thing, some another; some recommend the study of nature, others are all for the antique; some insist on the utmost finishing, others explode all attention to *minutiae*; artists find one fault, the uninstructed spectator another; and in going backwards and forwards from one to another, listening to new reasons and new objections, in reconciling all parties and pleasing none, life is passed in endless doubts and difficulties, and we discover that our most valuable years have fled in busy preparations to do—nothing. It is then too late, and we consume the remainder in vain regrets and querulous repinings, as we did the flower and marrow of our time in fanciful speculation and egregious trifling. The student should of all things steer clear of the character of the *dilettante*—it is the rock on which he is most likely to split. Pleasure, or extravagance, or positive idleness, are less dangerous; for these he knows to be fatal to his success, and he indulges in them with his eyes open; but in the other case he is thrown off his guard by the most plausible appearances. Vanity here puts on the garb of humility; indecision, of long-sighted perseverance; and habitual sloth, of constant industry. Few will reproach us, while we are accumulating the means of ultimate success, with neglecting the end; or remind us that, though art is long, life is short. It is true, that art is a long and steep ascent, but we must learn to scale it by regular, practical stages, and not by a hasty wish or still more futile calculations and measurements of the height. We can only, indeed, be sensible of its real height by the actual progress we have made, and by the glorious views that gradually dawn upon us, the cheerers of our way and the har-

bingers of our success. It is only by attempting something that we feel where our strength lies, and if we have what travellers call a *forte journée* to perform, it is the more indispensable that we should set out betimes and not loiter on the road. What is well done is the consequence of doing much—perfection is the reward of numberless attempts and failures. The chief requisites are a practised hand and eye, and an active imagination. Indolent taste and passive acquirements are not enough. They will neither supply our wants while living, nor enable us to leave a name behind us after we are dead. Further, the brooding over excellence with a feverish importunity, and stimulating ourselves to great things by an abstract love of fame, can do little good, and may do much harm. It is, no doubt, a very delightful and enviable state of mind to be in, but neither a very arduous nor a very profitable one. Nothing remarkable was ever done, except by following up the impulse of our own minds, by grappling with difficulties and improving our advantages, not by dreaming over our own premature triumphs or doating on the achievements of others.

If it were nothing else, the having the works of the great masters of former times always before us is enough to discourage and defeat all ordinary attempts. How many elegant designs and meritorious conceptions must lie buried under the high-arched porticoes of the Vatican! The walls of the Sistine Chapel must fall upon the head of inferior pretensions, and crush them. What minor pencil can stand in competition with the “petrific mace” that painted the “Last Judgment?” What fancy can expand into blooming grace and beauty by the side of the “Heliodorus?” What is it we could add, or what occasion, what need, what pretence is there to add anything, to the art after this? Who in the presence of such glorious works does not wish to shrink into himself, or to live only for them? Is it not a profanation to think he can hope to do anything like them?

And who, having once seen, can think with common patience or with zealous enthusiasm of doing aught but treading in their footsteps? If the artist has a genius and turn of mind at all similar, they baulk and damp him by their imposing, stately height: if his talent lies in a different and humbler walk, they divert and unsettle his mind. If he is contented to look on and admire, a vague and unattainable idea of excellence floats before his imagination, and tantalises him with equally vain hopes and wishes. If he copies, he becomes a mechanic, and besides runs another risk. He finds he can with ease produce in three days an incomparably finer effect than he could do, with all his efforts and after any length of time, in working without assistance. He is therefore disheartened and put out of countenance, and returns with reluctance to original composition; for where is the sense of taking ten times the pains and undergoing ten times the anxiety to produce not one-hundredth part of the effect? When I was young, I made one or two studies of strong contrasts of light and shade in the manner of Rembrandt with great care and (as it was thought) with some success. But after I had once copied some of Titian's portraits in the Louvre, my ambition took a higher flight. Nothing would serve my turn but heads like Titian—Titian expressions, Titian complexions, Titian dresses; and as I could not find these where I was, after one or two abortive attempts to engraft Italian art on English nature, I flung away my pencil in disgust and despair. Otherwise I might have done as well as others, I dare say, but from a desire to do too well. I did not consider that Nature is always the great thing, or that "Pan is a god, Apollo is no more." Nor is the student repelled and staggered in his progress only by the degree of excellence, but distracted and puzzled by the variety of incompatible claims upon his ingenuous and sincere enthusiasm. While any one attends to what circumstances bring in his way, or keeps in the path that is prompted by his own

genius (such as it may be), he stands a fair chance, by directing all his efforts to one point, to compass the utmost object of his ambition. But what likelihood is there of this from the moment that all the great schools, and all the most precious *chefs-d'œuvre* of art, at once unveil their diversified attractions to his astonished sight? What Protestant, for instance, can be properly and permanently imbued with the fervent devotion or saint-like purity of the Catholic religion, or hope to transfer the pride, pomp, and pageantry of that detested superstition to his own canvas with real feeling and *con amore*? What modern can enter fully into the spirit of the ancient Greek mythology, or rival the symmetry of its naked forms? What single individual will presume to unite "the colouring of Titian, the drawing of Raffaele, the airs of Guido, the learning of Poussin, the purity of Domenichino, the *correggiosity* of Correggio, and the grand contour of Michael Angelo" in the same composition? Yet those who are familiar with all these different styles and their excellences, require them all. Mere originality will not suffice; it is quaint and Gothic—commonplace perfection is still more intolerable; it is insipid and mechanical. Modern art is, indeed, like the fabled Sphinx, that imposes impossible tasks on her votaries, and as she clasps them to her bosom pierces them to the heart. Let a man have a turn and taste for landscape, she whispers him that nothing is truly interesting but the human face: if he makes a successful *débût* in portrait, he soon (under the same auspices) aspires to history; but if painting in its highest walks seems within his reach, she then plays off the solid forms and shining surfaces of sculpture before his eyes, urging him to combine the simple grandeur of the antique with Canova's polished elegance; or he is haunted with the majestic effects and scientific rules of architecture, and ruined temples and broken fragments nod in his bewildered imagination! What is to be done in this case? What generally is done?—nothing.

Amidst so many pretensions, how is choice possible? Or where all are equally objects of taste and knowledge, how rest satisfied without giving some proofs of our practical proficiency in all? To mould a clay figure that, if finished, might surpass the Venus; to make a pen-and-ink drawing after a splendid piece of colouring by Titian; to give the picturesque effect of the arch of some ancient aqueduct as seen by moonlight;—some such meagre abstractions and flimsy refinements in art are among the *spolia opima* and patchwork trophies offered to the presiding Goddess of spleen, idleness, and affectation.

Nothing can be conceived more unpropitious to “the high endeavour and the glad success” than the whole aspect and character of ancient Rome, both what remains as well as what is lost of it. Is this the Eternal City? Is this she that (Amazon or votaress) was twice mistress of the world? Is this the country of the Scipios, the Cincinnati and the Gracchi, of Cato and of Brutus, of Pompey and of Sylla? Is this the Capitol where Julius Cæsar fell, where Cicero thundered against Catiline, the scene of combats and of triumphs, and through whose gates kings and nations were led captive by the side of their conquerors’ chariot-wheels? All is vanished. The names alone remain to haunt the memory: the spirits of the mighty dead mock us as we pass. The genius of antiquity bestrides the place like a colossus. Ruin here sits on her pedestal of pride, and reads a mortifying lecture to human vanity. We see all that ages, nations, a subjected world, conspired to build up to magnificence, overthrown or hastening fast into decay: empire, religion, freedom, gods, and men trampled in the dust, or consigned to the regions of lasting oblivion or of shadowy renown: and what are we that, in this mighty wreck, we should think of cultivating our petty talents and advancing our individual pretensions? Rome is the very tomb of ancient greatness, the grave of modern presumption. The mere consciousness of the presence in which we stand

ought to abash and overawe our pragmatical self-conceit. Men here seem no better than insects crawling about; everything has a Liliputian and insignificant appearance. Our big projects, our bloated egotism, shrink up within the enormous shadow of transitory power and splendour: the sinews of desire relax and moulder away, and the fever of youthful ambition is turned into a cold ague-fit. There is a languor in the air; and the contagion of listless apathy infects the hopes that are yet unborn. As to what remains of actual power and spiritual authority, Hobbes said well that "Popery was the ghost of the Roman Empire, sitting upon the ruins of Rome." The only flourishing thing in Rome (and that is only half flourishing) is an old woman; and who would wish to be an old woman? Greatness here is greatness in masquerade—one knows not whether to pity or laugh at it—and the Cardinals' red legs, peeping out like the legs of some outlandish stuffed bird in a museum, excite much the same curiosity and surprise. No one (no Englishman at least) can be much edified by the array of distinctions, that denote a consummation of Art or weakness. Still, perhaps, to the idle and frivolous there may be something alluring in this meretricious mummery and splendour, as moths are attracted with the taper's blaze, and perish in it!

There is a great deal of gossiping and stuff going on at Rome. There are *conversazioni*, where the Cardinals go and admire the fair complexions and innocent smiles of the young Englishwomen; and where the English students who have the *entrée* look at the former with astonishment as a sort of nondescripts, and are not the less taken with their pretty countrywomen for being the objects of attention to Popish Cardinals. Then come the tittle-tattle of who and who's together, the quaint and piquant international gallantries, and the story of the greatest beauty in Rome said to be married to an English gentleman—how odd and at the same time how encouraging! Then the manners

and customs of Rome excite a buzz of curiosity, and the English imagination is always recurring to and teased with that luckless question of *cicisbeism*. Some affect to be candid, while others persist in their original blindness, and would set on foot a reform of the Roman metropolis—on the model of the British one! In short, there is a great deal too much tampering and dalliance with subjects with which we have little acquaintance and less business; all that passes the time, and relieves the mind either after the fatigue or in the absence of more serious study. Then there is to be an Academy Meeting at night, and a debate is to take place whether the Academy ought not to have a President, and, if so, whether the President of the Academy at Rome ought not (out of respect) to be a Royal Academician, thus extending the links in the chain of professional intrigue and cabal from one side of the Continent to the other. A speech is accordingly to be made, a motion seconded, which requires time and preparation—or a sudden thought strikes the more raw and heedless adventurer, but is lost for words to express it—*vox faucibus hæsit*, and the cast of the Theseus looks dull and lumpish, as the disappointed candidate for popular applause surveys it by the light of his lamp in retiring to his chamber, *Solet infelix Theseus*, &c. So the next day Gibbon is bought and studied with great avidity to give him a command of tropes and figures at their next meeting. The arrival of some new lord or squire of high degree or clerical virtuoso is announced, and a cabal immediately commences who is to share his patronage, who is to guide his taste, who is to show him the lions, who is to pasquinade, epigrammatise, or caricature him, and fix his pretensions to taste and liberality as culminating from the zenith or sunk below zero. Everything here is transparent and matter of instant notoriety: nothing can be done in a corner. The English are comparatively few in number, and from their being in a foreign country are objects of importance to one another

as well as of curiosity to the natives. All ranks and classes are blended together for mutual attack or defence. The patron sinks into the companion ; the *protégé* plays off the great man upon occasion. Indeed, the grand airs and haughty reserve of English manners are a little ridiculous and out of place at Rome. You are glad to meet with any one who will bestow his compassion and "his tediousness" upon you. You want some shelter from the insolence and indifference of the inhabitants, which are very much calculated to repel the feelings, and throw you back on your resources in common humanity or the partiality of your fellow-countrymen. Nor is this the least inconvenience of a stranger's residence at Rome. You have to squabble with every one about you to prevent being cheated, to drive a hard bargain in order to live, to keep your hands and your tongue within strict bounds, for fear of being stilettoed, or thrown into the Tower of St Angelo, or remanded home. You have much ado to avoid the contempt of the inhabitants ; if you fancy you can ingratiate yourself with them and play off the amiable, you have a still more charming pursuit and bait for vanity and idleness. You must run the gauntlet of sarcastic words or looks for a whole street, of laughter or want of comprehension in reply to all the questions you ask ! or if a pretty black-browed girl puts on a gracious aspect, and seems to interest herself in your perplexity, you think yourself in high luck and well repaid for a thousand affronts. A smile from a Roman beauty must be well nigh fatal to many an English student at Rome. In short, while abroad, and while our self-love is continually coming into collision with that of others, and neither knows what to make of the other, we are necessarily thinking of ourselves and of them, and in no pleasant or profitable way. Everything is strange and new ; we seem beginning life over again, and feel like children or rustics. We have not learned the alphabet of civilisation and humanity ; how, then, should we aspire to

the height of art? We are taken up with ourselves as English travellers and English students, when we should be thinking of something else. All the petty intrigue, vexation, and *tracasserie* of ordinary dealings should be banished as much as possible from the mind of the student, who requires to have his whole time and faculties to himself; all ordinary matters should go on mechanically of themselves without giving him a moment's uneasiness or interruption; but here they are forced upon him with tenfold sharpness and frequency, hurting his temper and hindering his time. Instead of "tearing from his memory all trivial, fond records," that he may devote himself to the service of art, and that "her commandment all alone may live within the book and volume of his brain, unmixed with baser matter," he is never free from the most pitiful annoyances—they follow him into the country, sit down with him at home, meet him in the street, take him by the button, whisper in his ear, prevent his sleeping, waken him before the dawn, and plague him out of his very life, making it resemble a restless dream or an ill-written romance. Under such disadvantages, should an artist do anything, the Academy which has sent him out should lose no time in sending for him back again; for there is nothing that may not be expected from an English student at Rome who has not become an idler, a *petit maître*, and a busybody! Or if he is still unwilling to quit classic ground, is chained by the soft fetters of the climate or of a fair face, or likes to see the morning mist rise from the marshes of the Campagna and circle round the dome of St Peter's, and that to sever him from this would be to sever soul from body, let him go to Genzano, stop there for five years, visiting Rome only at intervals, wander by Albano's gleaming lake and wizard grottoes, make studies of the heads and dresses of the peasant girls in the neighbourhood, those golden ones of health and good temper, embody them to the life, and show (as the result) what the world never saw before!

FONTHILL ABBEY.

THE old sarcasm—*Omne ignotum pro magnifico est*—cannot be justly applied here. FONTHILL ABBEY, after being enveloped in impenetrable mystery for a length of years, has been unexpectedly thrown open to the vulgar gaze, and has lost none of its reputation for magnificence—though, perhaps, its visionary glory, its classic renown, have vanished from the public mind for ever. It is, in a word, a desert of magnificence, a glittering waste of laborious idleness, a cathedral turned into a toy-shop, an immense museum of all that is most curious and costly, and, at the same time, most worthless, in the productions of art and nature. Ships of pearl and seas of amber are scarce a fable here—a nautilus's shell surmounted with a gilt triumph of Neptune—tables of agate, cabinets of ebony and precious stones, painted windows “shedding a gaudy, crimson light,” satin borders, marble floors, and lamps of solid gold—Chinese pagodas and Persian tapestry—all the splendour of Solomon's temple is displayed to the view—in miniature whatever is far-fetched and dear-bought, rich in the materials, or rare and difficult in the workmanship—but scarce one genuine work of art, one solid proof of taste, one lofty relic of sentiment or imagination!

The difficult, the unattainable, the exclusive are to be found here in profusion, in perfection; all else is wanting, or is brought in merely as a foil or as a stop-gap. In this respect the collection is as satisfactory as it is *unique*. The specimens exhibited are the best, the most highly finished, the most costly and curious of that kind of ostentatious magnificence which is calculated to gratify the sense of

property in the owner, and to excite the wondering curiosity of the stranger, who is permitted to see or (as a choice privilege and favour) even to touch baubles so dazzling and of such exquisite nicety of execution ; and which, if broken or defaced, it would be next to impossible to replace. The same character extends to the pictures, which are mere furniture-pictures, remarkable chiefly for their antiquity or painful finishing, without beauty, without interest, and with about the same pretensions to attract the eye or delight the fancy as a well-polished mahogany table or a waxed oak-floor. Not one great work by one great name, scarce one or two of the worst specimens of the first masters, Leonardo's "Laughing Boy," or a copy from Raffaele or Correggio, as if to make the thing remote and finical—but heaps of the most elaborate pieces of the worst of the Dutch masters, Breughel's "Sea-horses," with coats of mother-of-pearl, and Rothenhamer's "Elements" turned into a Flower-piece. The catalogue, in short, is guiltless of the names of those works of art

"Which like a trumpet make the spirit dance,"

and is sacred to those which rank no higher than veneering, and where the painter is on a precise par with the carver and gilder. Such is not our taste in art ; and we confess we should have been a little disappointed in viewing Fonthill, had not our expectations been disabused beforehand. Oh ! for a glimpse of the Escorial ! where the piles of Titians lie ; where nymphs, fairer than lilies, repose in green, airy, pastoral landscapes, and Cupids, with curled locks, pluck the wanton vine ; at whose beauty, whose splendour, whose truth and freshness, Mengs could not contain his astonishment, nor Cumberland his raptures ;

"While groves of Eden, vanish'd now so long.

Live in description, and look green in song ;"

the very thought of which, in that monastic seclusion and low dell, surrounded by craggy precipices, gives the mind

a calenture, a longing desire to plunge through wastes and wilds, to visit at the shrine of such beauty, and be buried in the bosom of such verdant sweetness. Get thee behind us, Temptation! or not all China and Japan will detain us, and this article will be left unfinished, or found (as a volume of Keats's poems was carried out by Mr Ritchie to be dropped in the Great Desert) in the sorriest inn in the farthest part of Spain, or in the marble baths of the Moorish Alhambra, or amidst the ruins of Tadmor, or in barbaric palaces, where Bruce encountered Abyssinian queens! Anything to get all this frippery and finery and tinsel and glitter and embossing and system of tantalisation and fret-work of the imagination out of our heads, and take one deep, long, oblivious draught of the romantic and marvellous, the thirst of which the fame of Fonthill Abbey has raised in us, but not satisfied!

Mr Beckford has undoubtedly shown himself an industrious *bijoutier*, a prodigious virtuoso, an accomplished patron of unproductive labour, an enthusiastic collector of expensive trifles—the only proof of taste (to our thinking) he has shown in this collection is *his getting rid of it*. What splendour, what grace, what grandeur might he substitute in lieu of it! What a handwriting might he spread out upon the walls! What a spirit of poetry and philosophy might breathe there! What a solemn gloom, what gay vistas of fancy, like chequered light and shade, might genius, guided by art, shed around! The author of *Vathek* is a scholar; the proprietor of Fonthill has travelled abroad, and has seen all the finest remains of antiquity and boasted specimens of modern art. Why not lay his hands on some of these? He had power to carry them away. One might have expected to see, at least, a few fine old pictures, marble copies of the celebrated statues, the Apollo, the Venus, the Dying Gladiator, the Antinous, antique vases with their elegant sculptures, or casts from them; coins, medals, bas-reliefs; something con-

nected with the beautiful forms of external nature, or with what is great in the mind or memorable in the history of man—Egyptian hieroglyphics, or Chaldee manuscripts on paper made of the reeds of the Nile, or mummies from the Pyramids ! Not so ; not a trace (or scarcely so) of any of these—as little as may be of what is classical or imposing to the imagination from association or well-founded prejudice ; hardly an article of any consequence that does not seem to be labelled to the following effect—*This is mine, and there is no one else in the whole world in whom it can inspire the least interest, or any feeling beyond a momentary surprise!* To show another your property is an act in itself ungracious, or null and void. It excites no pleasure from sympathy. Every one must have remarked the difference in his feelings on entering a venerable old cathedral, for instance, and a modern-built private mansion. The one seems to fill the mind and expand the form, while the other only produces a sense of listless vacuity, and disposes us to shrink into our own littleness.

Whence is this, but that in the first case our associations of power, of interest, are general, and tend to aggrandise the species ; and that in the latter (*viz.*, the case of private property) they are exclusive and tend to aggrandise none but the individual ? This must be the effect, unless there is something grand or beautiful in the objects themselves that makes us forget the distinction of mere property, as from the noble architecture or great antiquity of a building ; or unless they remind us of common and universal nature, as pictures, statues do, like so many mirrors, reflecting the external landscape, and carrying us out of the magic circle of self love. But all works of art come under the head of property or showy furniture, which are neither distinguished by sublimity nor beauty, and are estimated only by the labour required to produce what is trifling or worthless, and are consequently nothing more than obtrusive proofs of the wealth of the immediate possessor. The motive for

the production of such toys is mercenary, and the admiration of them childish or servile. That which pleases merely from its novelty, or because it was never seen before, cannot be expected to please twice: that which is remarkable for the difficulty or costliness of the execution can be interesting to no one but the maker or owner. A shell, however rarely to be met with, however highly wrought or quaintly embellished, can only flatter the sense of curiosity for a moment in a number of persons, or the feeling of vanity for a greater length of time in a single person. There are better things than this (we will be bold to say) in the world both of nature and art—things of universal and lasting interest, things that appeal to the imagination and the affections. The village bell that rings out its sad or merry tidings to old men and maidens, to children and matrons, goes to the heart, because it is a sound significant of weal or woe to all, and has borne no uninteresting intelligence to you, to me, and to thousands more who have heard it perhaps for centuries. There is a sentiment in it. The face of a Madonna (if equal to the subject) has also a sentiment in it “whose price is above rubies.” It is a shrine, a consecrated source of high and pure feeling, a well-head of lovely expression, at which the soul drinks and is refreshed, age after age. The mind converses with the mind, or with that nature which, from long and daily intimacy, has become a sort of second self to it: but what sentiment lies hid in a piece of porcelain? What soul can you look for in a gilded cabinet or a marble slab? Is it possible there can be anything like a feeling of littleness or jealousy in this proneness to a merely ornamental taste, that, from not sympathising with the higher and more expansive emanations of thought, shrinks from their display with conscious weakness and inferiority? If it were an apprehension of an invidious comparison between the proprietor and the author of any signal work of genius, which the former did not covet, one would think he must be at least

equally mortified at sinking to a level in taste and pursuits with the maker of a Dutch toy. Mr Beckford, however, has always had the credit of the highest taste in works of art as well as in *vertù*. As the showman in Goldsmith's comedy declares that "his bear dances to none but the genteelest of tunes—*Water parted from the Sea, The Minuet in Ariadne*"—so it was supposed that this celebrated collector's money went for none but the finest Claudes and the choicest specimens of some rare Italian master. The two Claudes are gone. It is as well—they must have felt a little out of their place here—they are kept in countenance, where they are, by the very best company!

We once happened to have the pleasure of seeing Mr Beckford in the Great Gallery of the Louvre—he was very plainly dressed in a loose great coat, and looked somewhat pale and thin—but what brought the circumstance to our minds was that we were told on this occasion one of those thumping matter-of-fact lies which are pretty common to other Frenchmen besides Gascons—*viz.*, that he had offered the First Consul no less a sum than two hundred thousand guineas for the purchase of the *St Peter Martyr*. Would that he had! and that Napoleon had taken him at his word!—which we think not unlikely. With two hundred thousand guineas he might have taken some almost impregnable fortress. "Magdeburg," said Bonaparte, "is worth a hundred queens:" and he would have thought such another stronghold worth at least one Saint. As it is, what an opportunity have we lost of giving the public an account of this picture! Yet why not describe it, as we see it still "in our mind's eye," standing on the floor of the Tuileries, with none of its brightness impaired, through the long perspective of waning years! There it stands, and will for ever stand in our imagination, with the dark, scowling, terrific face of the murdered monk looking up to his assassin, the horror-struck features of the flying priest, and the skirts of his vest waving in the wind, the shattered

branches of the autumnal trees that feel the coming gale, with that cold convent spire rising in the distance amidst the sapphire hills and golden sky—and overhead are seen the cherubim bringing with rosy fingers the crown of martyrdom; and (such is the feeling of truth, the soul of faith in the picture) you hear floating near, in dim harmonies, the pealing anthem and the heavenly choir! Surely, the St Peter Martyr surpasses all Titian's other works, as he himself did all other painters. Had this picture been transferred to the present collection (or any picture like it) what a trail of glory would it have left behind it! for what a length of way would it have haunted the imagination! how often should we have wished to revisit it, and how fondly would the eye have turned back to the stately tower of Fonthill Abbey, that from the western horizon gives the setting sun to other climes, as the beacon and guide to the knowledge and the love of high art!

The Duke of Wellington, it is said, has declared Fonthill to be "the finest thing in Europe." If so, it is since the dispersion of the Louvre. It is also said that the King is to visit it. We do not mean to say it is not a fit place for the King to visit, or for the Duke to praise: but we know this, that it is a very bad one for us to describe. The father of Mr Christie was supposed to be "equally great on a ribbon or a Raphael." This is unfortunately not our case. We are not "great" at all, but least of all in little things. We have tried in various ways: we can make nothing of it. Look here—this is the Catalogue. Now what can we say (who are not auctioneers but critics) to

Six Japan heron-pattern embossed dishes; or,
Twelve burnt-in dishes in compartments; or,
Sixteen ditto enamelled with insects and birds; or,
Seven embossed soup-plates, with plants and rich borders; or,
Nine chocolate cups and saucers of egg-shell china, blue lotus
pattern; or,

- Two butter pots on feet, and a bason, cover, and stand of Japan ; or,
 Two basons and covers, sea-green mandarin ; or,
 A very rare specimen of the basket-work Japan, ornamented with flowers in relief, of the finest kind, the inside gilt, from the Ragland Museum ; or,
 Two fine enamelled dishes scalloped ; or,
 Two *blue bottles* and two red and gold cups—extra fine ; or,
 A very curious egg-shell lantern ; or,
 Two very rare Japan cups mounted as milk buckets, with silver rims, gilt and chased ; or,
 Two matchless Japan dishes ; or
 A very singular tray, the ground of a *curious wood artificially waved* with storks in various attitudes on the shore, mosaic border, and aventurine back ; or,
 Two extremely rare bottles with chimeras and plants, mounted in silver gilt ; or,
 Twenty-four fine OLD SEVRES desert plates ; or,
 Two precious enamelled bowl dishes, with silver handles ;—

Or, to stick to the capital letters in this Paradise of Dainty Devices, lest we should be suspected of singling out the meanest articles, we will just transcribe a few of them, for the satisfaction of the curious reader :—

- A RICH and HIGHLY ORNAMENTED CASKET of the very rare old JAPAN, completely covered with figures.
 AN ORIENTAL SCULPTURED TASSA OF LAPIS LAZULI, mounted in silver gilt, and set with lapis lazuli intaglios. From the Garde-Meuble of the late King of France.
 A PERSIAN JAD VASE and COVER, inlaid with flowers and ornaments composed of *oriental rubies and emeralds, on stems of fine gold*.
 A LARGE OVAL ENGRAVED ROCK CRYSTAL CUP, with the figure of a Syren, carved from the block, and embracing a part of the vessel with her wings, so as to form a handle ; from the ROYAL COLLECTION OF FRANCE.
 AN OVAL CUP and COVER OF ORIENTAL MAMILLATED AGATE, richly marked in arborescent moose, elaborately chased and engraved in a very superior manner. *An unique article.*

Shall we go on with this fooling ? We cannot. The reader must be tired of such an uninteresting account of empty jars and caskets—it reads so like Della Cruscan poetry. They are not even *Nugæ Canoræ*. The pictures

are much in the same *minminèe pimminèe* taste. For instance, in the first and second days' sale we meet with the following :—

A high-finished miniature drawing of a Holy Family, and a portrait : one of those with which the patents of the Venetian nobility were usually embellished.

A small landscape, by Breughel.

A small miniature painting after Titian, by Stella.

A curious painting, by Peter Peters Breughel, the Conflagration of Troy—a choice specimen of this scarce master.

A picture by Franks, representing the temptation of St Anthony.

A picture by old Breughel, representing a fête—a singular specimen of his first manner.

Lucas Cranach—The Madonna and Child—highly finished.

A crucifixion, painted upon a gold ground, by Andrea Orcagna, a rare and early specimen of Italic art. From the Campo Santo di Pisa.

A lady's portrait, by Cosway.

Netecher—a lady seated, playing on the harpsichord, &c.

Who cares anything about such frippery, time out of mind the stale ornaments of a pawnbroker's shop ; or about old Breughel, or Stella, or Franks, or Lucas Cranach, or Netecher, or Cosway ? But at that last name we pause, and must be excused if we consecrate to him a *petit souvenir* in our best manner : for he was Fancy's child. All other collectors are fools to him : they go about with painful anxiety to find out the realities—he *said* he had them—and in a moment made them of the breath of his nostrils and the fumes of a lively imagination. His was the crucifix that Abelard prayed to—the original manuscript of the Rape of the Lock—the dagger with which Felton stabbed the Duke of Buckingham—the first finished sketch of the Jocunda—Titian's large colossal portrait of Peter Aretine—a mummy of some particular Egyptian king. Were the articles authentic ? No matter—his faith in them was true. What a fairy palace was his of specimens of art, antiquarianism, and *vertù*, jumbled all together in the richest disorder, dusty, shadowy, obscure, with much left

to the imagination (how different from the finical, polished, petty, perfect, modernised air of Fonthill !), and with copies of the old masters, cracked and damaged, which he touched and retouched with his own hand, and yet swore they were the genuine, the pure originals ! He was gifted with a *second-sight* in such matters : he believed whatever was incredible. Happy mortal ! Fancy bore sway in him, and so vivid were his impressions that they included the reality in them. The agreeable and the true with him were one. He believed in Swedenborgianism—he believed in animal magnetism—he had conversed with more than one person of the Trinity—he could talk with his lady at Mantua through some fine vehicle of sense, as we speak to a servant down-stairs through an ear-pipe. Richard Cosway was not the man to flinch from an *ideal* proposition. Once, at an Academy dinner, when some question was made whether the story of Lambert's leap was true, he started up and said it was, for he was the man that performed it—he once assured us that the knee-pan of James I. at Whitehall was nine feet across (he had measured it in concert with Mr Cipriani) ; he could read in the book of Revelation without spectacles, and foretold the return of Bonaparte from Elba and from St Helena. His wife, the most lady-like of Englishwomen, being asked, in Paris, what sort of a man her husband was, answered, *Toujours rient, toujours gai*. This was true. He must have been of French extraction. His soul had the life of a bird ; and such was the jauntiness of his air and manner that, to see him sit to have his half-bouts laced on, you would fancy (with the help of a figure) that, instead of a little, withered, elderly gentleman, it was Venus attired by the Graces. His miniatures were not fashionable—they were fashion itself. When more than ninety, he retired from his profession, and used to hold up the palsied right hand that had painted lords and ladies for upwards of sixty years, and smiled, with unabated good humour, at the vanity of human

wishes. Take him with all his faults or follies, “we scarce shall look upon his like again!”

After speaking of him we are ashamed to go back to Fonthill, lest one drop of gall should fall from our pen. No, for the rest of our way, we will dip it in the milk of human kindness, and deliver all with charity. There are four or five very curious cabinets—a triple jewel cabinet of opaque, with panels of transparent amber, dazzles the eye like a temple of the New Jerusalem—the Nautilus’s shell, with the triumph of Neptune and Amphitrite, is elegant, and the table on which it stands superb—the cups, vases, and sculptures, by Cellini, Berg, and John of Bologna, are as admirable as they are rare—the Berghem (a sea-port) is a fair specimen of that master—the Poulterer’s Shop, by G. Douw, is passable—there are some middling Bassans—the Sibylla Libyca, of L. Caracci, is in the grand style of composition—there is a good copy of a head by Parmegiano—the painted windows in the centre of the Abbey have a surprising effect—the form of the building (which was raised by torch-light) is fantastical, to say the least—and the grounds, which are extensive and fine from situation, are laid out with the hand of a master. A quantity of coot, teal, and wild fowl sport in a crystal stream that winds along the park; and their dark brown coats, seen in the green shadows of the water, have a most picturesque effect. Upon the whole, if we were not much pleased by our excursion to Fonthill, we were very little disappointed; and the place altogether is consistent and characteristic.

ON FLAXMAN'S LECTURES ON SCULPTURE.

THESE lectures were delivered at the Royal Academy in an annual course, instituted expressly for that purpose. They are not, on the whole, ill calculated to promote the object for which they were originally designed, to guide the taste and stimulate the inquiries of the student ; but we should doubt whether there is much in them to interest the public. They may be characterised as the work of a sculptor by profession—dry and hard, a meagre outline, without colouring or adventitious ornament. The editor states that he has left them scrupulously as he found them : there are, in consequence, some faults of grammatical construction of trifling import ; and many of the paragraphs are thrown into the form of notes or loose memoranda, and read like a table of contents. Nevertheless, there is a great and evident knowledge of the questions treated of ; and wherever there is knowledge there is power, and a certain degree of interest. It is only a pen guided by inanity or affectation that can strip such subjects of instruction and amusement. Otherwise, the body of ancient or of modern art is like the loadstone, to which the soul vibrates responsive, however cold or repulsive the form in which it appears. We have, however, a more serious fault to object to the present work than the mere defects of style or mode of composition. It is with considerable regret and reluctance we confess that, though it may add to the students' knowledge of the art, it will contribute little to the *understanding* of it. It abounds in rules rather than principles. The examples, authorities, precepts are full, just, and well-selected. The terms of art are unexceptionably applied ; the different styles very pro-

perly designated ; the mean is distinguished from the lofty ; due praise is bestowed on the *graceful*, the *grand*, the *beautiful*, the *ideal* ; but the reader comprehends no more of the meaning of these qualities at the end of the work than he did at the beginning. The tone of the lectures is dogmatical rather than philosophical. The judgment for the most part is sound, though no new light is thrown on the grounds on which it rests. Mr Flaxman is contented to take up with traditional maxims, with adjudged cases, with the acknowledged theory and practice of art : and it is well that he does so ; for when he departs from the habitual bias of his mind, and attempts to enter into an explanation or defence of first principles, the reasons which he advances are often weak, warped, insufficient, or contradictory. His arguments are neither solid nor ingenious : they are merely quaint and gratuitous. If we were to hazard a general opinion, we should be disposed to say that a certain setness and formality, a certain want of flexibility and power, ran through the character of his whole mind. His compositions as a sculptor are classical—cast in an approved mould ; but, generally speaking, they are elegant outlines—poetical abstractions converted into marble, yet still retaining the essential character of words ; and the professor's opinions and views of art, as here collected, exhibit barely the surface and crust of commonly received maxims, with little depth or originality. The characteristics of his mind were precision, elegance, cool judgment, industry, and a laudable and exclusive attachment to *the best*. He wanted richness, variety, and force.

The first lecture—on the history of early British sculpture—will be found to contain some novel and curious information. At its very commencement, however, we find two instances of perverse or obscure reasoning, which we cannot entirely pass over. In allusion to the original institution and objects of the Royal Academy, the author observes that, “as the study of sculpture was at that time confined

within narrow limits, so the appointment of a professorship in that art was not required, until the increasing taste of the country had given great popularity to the art itself, and native achievements had called on the powers of native sculpture to celebrate British heroes and patriots." Does Mr Flaxman mean by this to insinuate that Britain had neither patriots nor heroes to boast of till after the establishment of the Royal Academy, and a little before that of the professorship of sculpture? If so, we cannot agree with him. It would be only a single step further to assert that the study of astronomy had not been much encouraged in this country, till the discovery of the *Georgium Sidus* was thought to call for it, and for the establishment of an observatory at Greenwich! In the next page, the lecturer remarks, "Painting is honoured with precedence, because design or drawing is more particularly and exclusively employed in illustration of history. Sculpture immediately follows in the enumeration, because the two arts possess the same common principles, expressed by painting in colour, and by sculpture in form." Surely there is here some confusion, either in the thoughts or in the language. First, painting takes precedence of sculpture, because it illustrates history by design or form, which is common to both; next sculpture comes after painting, because it illustrates by form what painting does *not* illustrate by form, but by colour. We cannot make any sense of this. It is from repeated similar specimens that we are induced to say that, when Mr Flaxman reasons, he reasons ill.

After giving a condensed and patriotic sketch of the rise and early progress of sculpture in our own country, Mr Flaxman proceeds to trace the progress of the art, and the growing passion for it among the English, through the reign of Henry VII. to the period when its prospects were blighted by the Reformation, and many of its monuments defaced by the iconoclastic fury of the Puritans and zealots in the time of Charles I. The lecturer seems to be of

opinion that the genius of sculpture in our island was arrested in the full career of excellence, and when it was approaching the goal of perfection, by these two events, which drew aside the public attention, and threw a stigma on the encouragement of sacred sculpture; whereas, it would, perhaps, be just as fair to argue that these events would never have happened had it not been for a certain indifference in the national character to mere outward impressions, and a slowness to appreciate, or form an enthusiastic attachment to, objects that appeal only to the imagination and the senses. We may be influenced by higher and more solid principles—reason and philosophy; but that makes nothing to the question. Mr Flaxman bestows great and deserved praise on the monuments of Aylmer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, and Edmund Crouchback in Westminster Abbey, which are by English artists, whose names are preserved; but speaks slightly of the tomb of Henry VII. and his wife in Henry the Seventh's chapel, by Torregiano from whom, on trivial and insufficient grounds, he withholds the merit of the other sculptures and ornaments of the chapel. This is prejudice, and not wisdom. We think the tomb alone will be monument enough to that artist in the opinion of all who have seen it. We have no objection to, but on the contrary applaud, the lecturer's zeal to repel the imputation of incapacity from British art and to detect the lurking traces and doubtful prognostics of it in the records of our early history: but we are, at the same time, convinced that tenaciousness on this point creates an unfavourable presumption on the other side; and we make bold to submit that, whenever the national capacity bursts forth in the same favourable and striking way in the fine arts that it has done in so many others, we shall no longer have occasion to praise ourselves for what we either have done or what we are to do—the world will soon be loud in the acknowledgment of it. Works of ornament and splendour must dazzle and

claim attention at the first sight, or they do not answer their end. They are not like the deductions of an abstruse philosophy, or even improvements in practical affairs, which may make their way slowly and under-ground. They are not a light placed under a bushel, but like "a city set on a hill, that cannot be hid!" To *appear*, and to *be*, are with them the same thing. Neither are we much better satisfied with the arguments of the learned professor to show that the series of statuary in Wells Cathedral is of native English workmanship. The difference of style from the tombs of Edward the Confessor and of Henry III., by Italians, can be of little weight at a period when the principles of art were so unsettled, and each person did the best he could, according to his own taste and knowledge; and as to the second branch of the evidence, viz., that "the family name of the Bishop is English, Jocelyn Trotteman," it sounds too much like a parody on the story of him who wanted to prove his descent from the admirable Crichton, by his having a family cup in his possession, with the initials A. C.!

We dwell the longer and more willingly on the details and recollections of the early works of which the author speaks so feelingly, as first informed with life and sentiment, because all relating to that remote period of architecture and sculpture exercises a peculiar charm and fascination over our minds. It is not art in its "high and palmy state," with its boasted refinements about it, that we look at with envy and wonder, so much as in its first rude attempts and conscious yearnings after excellence. They were, indeed, the favoured of the earth, into whom genius first breathed the breath of life; who, born in a night of ignorance, first beheld the sacred dawn of light—those Deucalions of art who, after the deluge of barbarism and violence had subsided, stood alone in the world, and had to sow the seeds of countless generations of knowledge. We can conceive of some village Michael Angelo, with a

soul too mighty for its tenement of clay, whose longing aspirations after truth and good were palsied by the refusal of his hand to execute them—struggling to burst the trammels and trying to shake off the load of discouragement that oppressed him : what must be his exultation to see the speaking statue, the stately pile, rise up slowly before him—the idea in his mind embodied out of nothing, without model or precedent—to see a huge cathedral heave its ponderous weight above the earth, or the solemn figure of an apostle point from one corner of it to the skies ; to think that future ages would, perhaps, gaze at the work with the same delight and wonder that his own did, and not suffer his name to sink into the same oblivion as those who had gone before him, or as the brutes that perish—this was, indeed, to be admitted into the communion, the holiest of holies of genius, and to drink of the waters of life freely ! Art, as it springs from the source of genius, is like the act of creation ; it has the same obscurity and grandeur about it ; afterwards, whatever perfection it attains, it becomes mechanical. Its strongest impulse and inspiration is derived, not from what it has done, but from what it has to do. It is not surprising that from this state of anxiety and awe with which it regards its appointed task—the unknown bourne that lies before it, such startling revelations of the world of truth and beauty are often struck out when one might least expect it, and that art has sometimes leaped at one vast bound from its cradle to its grave ! Mr Flaxman, however, strongly inculcates the contrary theory, and is for raising up art to its most majestic height by the slow and circuitous process of an accumulation of rules and machinery. He seems to argue that its advance is on a gradually inclined plane, keeping pace and co-extended with that of science ; “growing with its growth, and strengthening with its strength.” It appears to us that this is not rightly to weigh the essential differences either of science or art ; and that it is flying in the

face both of fact and argument. He says it took sculpture nine hundred or a thousand years to advance from its first rude commencement to its perfection in Greece and Egypt : but we must remember that the greatest excellence of the fine arts, both in Greece and Italy and in Holland, was concentrated into little more than a century ; and again, if art and science were synonymous, there can be no doubt that knowledge of anatomy and geometry is more advanced in England in the present day than it was at Athens in the time of Pericles ; but is our sculpture therefore superior ? The answer to this is, " No ; but it ought to be, and it will be." Spare us, good Mr Prophesier ! Art cannot be transmitted by a receipt or theorem, like science, and cannot therefore be improved *ad libitum*. It has inseparably to do with individual nature and individual genius.

The second lecture is on Egyptian sculpture, and here Mr Flaxman displays the same accurate information and diligent research as before. The Egyptian statues, the Sphynx, the Memnon, &c., were, as is well known, principally distinguished for their size and the immense labour and expense bestowed upon them. The critic, after justly characterising their style and merits, proceeds :—" Pythagoras, after he had studied several years in Egypt, sacrificed a hundred oxen in consequence of having discovered that a square of the longest side of a right angled triangle is equal to the two squares of the lesser sides of the same triangle ; and thence it follows that the knowledge of the Egyptians could not have been very great at that time in geometry. This will naturally account for that want of motion in their statues and relieves, which can only be obtained by a careful observation of nature, assisted by geometry."

This is, we apprehend, one of the weak points of Mr Flaxman's reasoning. That geometry may be of great use to fix and ascertain certain general principles of the art, we are far from disputing ; but surely it was no more

necessary for the Egyptian sculptor to wait for the discovery of Pythagoras's problem, before he could venture to detach the arms from the sides, than it was for the Egyptians themselves to remain swathed and swaddled up like mummies, without the power of locomotion, till Pythagoras came up with his geometrical diagram to set their limbs at liberty. If they could do this without a knowledge of mechanics, the sculptor could not help seeing it, and imperfectly copying it, if he had the use of his senses, or his wits about him. The greater probability is that the sepulchral statues were done from, or in imitation of, the mummies; or that, as the imitation of the variety of gesture or motion is always the most difficult, these stiff and monotonous positions were adopted (and subsequently adhered to from custom) as the safest and easiest.

After briefly noticing the defects of the Hindoo and other early sculpture, the author proceeds to account for the improved practice of the Greeks on the same formal and mechanical principles. "We find," he says, "upon these authorities (Vitruvius and the elder Pliny), that geometry and numbers were employed to ascertain the powers of motion and proportions; optics and perspective (as known to the ancients) to regulate projections, hollows, keeping, diminution, curvatures, and general effects in figures, groups, insulated or in relief, with accompaniments; and anatomy, to represent the bones, muscles, tendons, and veins, *as they appear on the surface of the human body and inferior animals*. "In this enlightened age, when the circle of science is so generally and well understood—when the connection and relation of one branch with another is demonstrated, and their principles applied from necessity and conviction, wherever possibility allows, in the liberal and mechanical arts, as well as all the other concerns of life—no one can be weak or absurd enough to suppose it is within the ability and province of human genius, without the principles of science previously ac-

quired—*by slight observation only*—to become possessed of the forms, characters and essences of objects in such a manner as to represent them with truth, force, and pathos at once! No; we are convinced by reason and experience, that ‘life is short, and art is long;’ and the perfection of all human productions depends on the indefatigable accumulation of knowledge and labour through a succession of ages.”

This paragraph, we cannot but think, proceeds altogether on a false estimate: it is a misdirection to the student. In following up the principles here laid down, the artist's life would not only be short, but misspent. Is there no medium, in our critic's view in this matter, between a “slight observation” of nature and scientific demonstration? If so, we will say there can be no fine art at all: for mere abstract and formal rules cannot produce truth, force, and pathos in individual forms; and it is equally certain that “slight observation” will not answer the end, if all but learned pedantry is to be accounted casual and superficial. This is to throw a slur on the pursuit, and an impediment in the way of the art itself.

Mr Flaxman seems here to suppose that our observation is profound and just, not according to the delicacy, comprehensiveness, or steadiness of the attention we bestow upon a given object, but depends on the discovery of some other object, which was before hid; or on the intervention of mechanical rules, which supersede the exercise of our senses and judgments—as if the outward appearance of things was concealed by a film of abstraction, which could only be removed by the spectacles of books. Thus, anatomy is said to be necessary “to represent the bones, muscles, tendons, and veins as they appear on the surface of the human body;” so that it is to be presumed that the anatomist, when he has with his knife and instruments laid bare the internal structure of the body, sees at a glance what he did not before see; but that the artist,

after poring over them all his life, is blind to the external appearance of veins, muscles, &c., till the seeing of what is concealed under the skin enables him, for the first time, to see what appears through it.

We do not deny that the knowledge of the internal conformation helps to explain and to determine the *meaning* of the outward appearance; what we object to as unwarrantable and pernicious doctrine is substituting the one process for the other, and speaking slightly of the study of nature in the comparison. It shows a want of faith in the principles and purposes of the art itself, and a wish to confound and prop it up with the grave mysteries and formal pretensions of science; which is to take away its essence and its pride. The student who sets to work under such an impression may accumulate a great deal of learned lumber, and envelop himself in diagrams, demonstrations, and the whole circle of the sciences; but while he is persuaded that the study of nature is but a "slight" part of his task, he will never be able to draw, colour, or *express* a single object, further than this can be done by a rule and compasses. The crutches of science will not lend wings to genius.

Suppose a person were to tell us that, if he pulled off his coat and laid bare his arm, this would give us (with all the attention he could bestow upon it) no additional insight into its form, colour, or the appearance of veins and muscles on the surface, unless he at the same suffered us to *flay it*; should we not laugh in his face, as wanting common sense, or conclude that he was laughing at us? So the late professor of sculpture lays little stress, in accounting for the progress of Grecian art, on the perfection which the human form acquired, and the opportunities for studying its varieties and movements in the Olympic exercises, but considers the whole miracle as easily solved, when the anatomist came with his probe and ploughed up the surface of the flesh, and the geometrician came with

his line and plummet, and demonstrated the centre of gravity. He sums up the question in these words: "In the early times of Greece, Pausanias informs us, the twelve gods were worshipped in Arcadia, under the forms of rude stones; and before Dædalus, the statues had eyes nearly shut, the arms attached to their sides, and the legs close together; but as *geometry, mechanics, arithmetic, and anatomy improved, painting and sculpture acquired action, proportion, and detailed parts.*" As to the slight account of the immediate observation of visible objects, the point may be settled by an obvious dilemma; either the eye sees the whole of any object before it, or it does not. If it sees and comprehends the whole of it, with all its parts and relations, then it must retain and be able to give a faithful and satisfactory resemblance, without calling in the aid of rules or science to prevent or correct errors and defects; just as the human face or form is perfectly represented in a looking-glass. But if the eye sees only a small part of what any visible object contains in it—has only a glimmering of colour, proportion, expression, &c., then this incipient and imperfect knowledge may be improved to an almost infinite degree by close attention, by study and practice, and by comparing a succession of objects with one another, which is the proper and essential province of the artist, independently of abstract rules or science. On further observation we notice many details in a face which escaped us at the first glance; by a study of faces and of mankind practically, we perceive expressions which the generality do not perceive; but this is not done by rule. The fallacy is in supposing that all that the first naked or hasty observation does not give is supplied by science and general theories, and not by a closer and continued observation of the thing itself, so that all that belongs to the latter department is necessarily casual and slight.

Mr Flaxman enforces the same argument by quoting the rules laid down by Vitruvius for ascertaining the true

principles of form and motion. This writer says that, if a man lies on his back, his arms and legs may be so extended that a circle may be drawn round, touching the extremities of his fingers and toes, the centre of which shall be his navel: also, a man standing upright, the length of his arms, when fully extended, is equal to his height; thus that the circle and the square equally contain the general form and motion of the human figure. From these hints, and the profound mathematical train of reasoning with which Leonardo da Vinci has pursued the subject, the author adds that a complete system of the principles followed by the ancient Greek sculptors may be drawn out: that is to say that, because all the inflections of figure and motion of which the human body is susceptible are contained within the above-mentioned circle or square, the knowledge of this formal generality includes a knowledge of all the subordinate and implied particulars. The contortions of the Laocoon, the agony of the Children, the look of the Dying Gladiator, the contour of the Venus, the grace and spirit of the Apollo, are all, it seems, contained within the limits of the circle or the square! Just as well might it be contended that, having got a square or oval frame, of the size of a picture by Titian or Vandyck, every one is qualified to paint a face within it equal in force or beauty to Titian or Vandyck!

In the same spirit of a determination to make art a handmaid attendant upon science, the author thus proceeds: "Pliny says, lib. xxxiv. cap. 8, Leontius, the contemporary of Phidias, first expressed tendons and veins—*primus nervos et venas expressit*—which was immediately after the anatomical researches and improvements of Hippocrates, Democritus, and their disciples; and we shall find, in the same manner, all the improvements in art followed improvements in science." Yet almost in the next page, Mr Flaxman himself acknowledges that even in the best times of Grecian sculpture, and the era of Phidias

and Praxiteles, dissections were rare, and anatomy very imperfectly understood, and cites "the opinion of the learned professor of anatomy, that the ancient artists owed much more to the study of living than dead bodies." Sir Anthony Carlisle, aware of the deficiencies of former ages in this branch of knowledge, and yet conscious that he himself would be greatly puzzled to carve the Apollo or the Venus, very naturally and wisely concludes that the latter depends upon a course of study, and an acquaintance with forms very different from any which he possesses. It is a smattering and affectation of science that leads men to suppose that it is capable of more than it really is, and of supplying the undefined and evanescent creations of art with universal and infallible principles. There cannot be an opinion more productive of presumption and sloth. The same turn of thought is insisted on in the fourth lecture—*on science*; nearly the whole of which, indeed, is devoted to a fuller development and exemplification of what appears to us a servile prejudice, though it would be unjust to Mr Flaxman to suppose and to insinuate that he is without a better sense and better principles of art, whenever he trusted to his own feelings and experience, instead of being hoodwinked by an idle theory.

The lecturer bestows due and eloquent praise on the horses in the Elgin collection, which he supposes to have been done under the superintendence and probably from designs by Phidias; but we are sorry he has not extended his eulogium to the figure of the Theseus, which appears to us a world of grace and grandeur in itself, and to say to the sculptor's art, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further!" What went before it was rude in the comparison; what came after it was artificial. It is the perfection of *style*, and would have afforded a much better exemplification of the force and meaning of that term than the school-boy definition adopted in the lecture on this subject; namely, that as poets and engravers use a *stylus*, or style,

to execute their works, the name of the instrument was metaphorically applied to express the article itself. *Style* properly means the mode of representing nature; and this again arises from the various character of men's minds, and the infinite variety of views which may be taken of nature. After seeing the Apollo, the Hercules, and other celebrated works of antiquity, we seem to have exhausted our stock of admiration, and to conceive that there is no higher perfection for sculpture to attain, or to aspire to. But, at the first sight of the Elgin Marbles, we feel that we have been in a mistake, and the ancient objects of our idolatry fall into an inferior class or style of art. They are comparatively, and without disparagement of their vast and almost superhuman merit, *stuck-up* gods and goddesses. But a new principle is at work in the others, which we had not seen or felt the want of before (not a studied trick or curious refinement, but an obvious truth, arising from a more intimate acquaintance with, and firmer reliance on nature); a principle of fusion, of motion, so that the marble flows like a wave. The common *antiques* represent the most perfect forms and proportions, with each part perfectly understood and executed; everything is brought out, everything is made as exquisite and imposing as it can be in itself; but each part seems to be cut out of the marble, and to answer to a model of itself in the artist's mind. But in the fragment of the Theseus, the whole is melted into one impression, like wax; there is all the flexibility, the malleableness of flesh; there is the same alternate tension and relaxation; the same sway and yielding of the parts; "the right hand knows what the left hand doeth;" and the statue bends and plays under the framer's mighty hand and eye, as if, instead of being a block of marble, it was provided with an internal machinery of nerves and muscles, and felt every the slightest pressure or motion from one extremity to the other. This, then, is the greatest grandeur of style, from the comprehensive idea

of the whole joined to the greatest simplicity, from the entire union and subordination of the parts. There is no ostentation, no stiffness, no over-laboured finishing. Every thing is in its place and degree, and put to its proper use. The greatest power is combined with the greatest ease ; there is the perfection of knowledge, with the total absence of a conscious display of it. We find so little of an appearance of art or labour that we might be almost tempted to suppose that the whole of these groups were done by means of *casts* from fine nature ; for it is to be observed that the commonest cast from nature has the same *style* or character of union, and re-action of parts, being copied from that which has life and motion in itself. What adds a passing gleam of probability to such a suggestion is that these statues were placed at a height where only the general effect could be distinguished, and that the back and hinder parts, which are just as scrupulously finished as the rest, and as true to the mould of nature, were fixed against a wall where they could not be seen at all ; and where the labour (if we do not suppose it to be in a great measure abridged mechanically) was wholly thrown away. However, we do not lay much stress on this consideration ; for we are aware that “ the labour we delight in physics pain,” and we believe that the person who *could* do the statue of the *Theseus* *would* do it, under all circumstances, and without fee or reward of any kind.

We conceive that the Elgin Marbles settle another disputed point of vital interest to the arts. Sir Joshua Reynolds contends, among others, that grandeur of style consists in giving only the *masses*, and leaving out the details. The statues we are speaking of repudiate this doctrine, and at least demonstrate the possibility of uniting the two things, which had been idly represented to be incompatible, as if they were not obviously found together in nature. A great number of parts may be collected into one mass ; and, on the other hand, a work may

equally want minute details, or large and imposing masses. Suppose all the light to be thrown on one side of a face, and all the shadow on the other; the *chiaroscuro* may be worked up with the utmost delicacy and pains in the one and every vein or freckle distinctly marked on the other, without destroying the general effect—that is, the two broad masses of light and shade. Mr Flaxman takes notice that there were two eras of Grecian art before the time of Pericles and Phidias, when it was at its height. In the first, they gave only a gross or formal representation of the objects; so that you could merely say, “This is a man, that is a horse.” To this clumsy concrete style succeeded the most elaborate finishing of parts, without selection, grace, or grandeur. “Elaborate finishing was soon afterwards” (after the time of Dædalus and his scholars) “carried to excess; undulating locks and spiral knots of hair like shells, as well as the drapery, were wrought with the most elaborate care and exactness; whilst the tasteless and barbarous character of the face and limbs remained much the same as in former times.” This was the natural course of things, to denote first the gross object, then to run into the opposite extreme, and give none but the detached parts. The difficulty was to unite the two in a noble and comprehensive idea of nature.

We are chiefly indebted, for the information or amusement we derive from Mr Flaxman's work, to the historical details of his subject. We cannot say that he has removed any of the doubts or stumbling-blocks in our way, or extended the land-marks of taste or reasoning. We turned with some interest to the lecture on *beauty*; for the artist has left specimens of this quality in several of his works. We were a good deal disappointed. It sets out in this manner: “That beauty is not merely an imaginary quality, but a real essence, may be inferred from the harmony of the universe; and the perfection of its wondrous parts we may understand from all surrounding nature;

and in this course of observation we find that man has more of beauty bestowed on him as he rises higher in creation." The rest is of a piece with this exordium, containing a dissertation on the various gradations of being, of which man is said to be at the top—on the authority of Socrates, who argues "that the human form is the most perfect of all forms, because it contains in it the principles and powers of all inferior forms." This assertion is either a flat contradiction of the fact, or an *antique* riddle, which we do not pretend to solve. Indeed, we hold the ancients, with all our veneration for them, to have been wholly destitute of philosophy in this department; and Mr Flaxman, who was taught when he was young to look up to them for light and instruction in the philosophy of art, has engrafted too much of it on his lectures. He defines beauty thus: "The most perfect human beauty is that *most free from deformity*, either of body or mind, and may be therefore defined—The most perfect soul in the most perfect body." In support of this truism, he strings a number of quotations together, as if he were stringing pearls:—

"In Plato's dialogue concerning the beautiful, he shows the power and influence of mental beauty on corporeal; and in his dialogue, entitled 'The greater Hippias,' Socrates observes in argument, 'That as a beautiful vase is inferior to a beautiful horse, and as a beautiful horse is not to be compared with a beautiful virgin, in the same manner a beautiful virgin is inferior in beauty to the immortal gods; for,' says he, 'there is a beauty incorruptible, ever the same.' It is remarkable that, immediately after, he says, 'Phidias is skilful in beauty.' Aristotle, the scholar of Plato, begins his Treatise on Morals thus:—'Every art, every method and institution, every action and council seems to seek some good; therefore the ancients pronounced the beautiful to be good.' Much, indeed, might be collected from this philosopher's treatises on morals, poetica, and physiognomy, of the

greatest importance to our subject ; but for the present we shall produce only two quotations from Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, which contain the immediate application of these principles to the arts of design. In the dialogue between Socrates and the sculptor Clito, Socrates concludes that 'statuary must represent the emotions of the soul by form;' and in the former part of the same dialogue Parrhasius and Socrates agree that 'the good and evil qualities of the soul may be represented in the figure of man by painting.' In the applications from this dialogue to our subject, we must remember, philosophy demonstrates that rationality and intelligence, although connected with animal nature, rise above it, and properly exist in a more exalted state. From such contemplations and maxims, the ancient artists sublimated the sentiments of their works, expressed in their choicest forms of nature; thus they produced their divinities, heroes, patriots, and philosophers, adhering to the principle of Plato that 'nothing is beautiful which is not good;' it was this which, in ages of polytheism and idolatry, still continued to enforce a popular impression of divine attributes and perfection."

If the ancient sculptors had had nothing but such maxims and contemplations as these to assist them in forming their statues, they would have been greatly to seek indeed! Take these homilies on the beautiful and the good, together with Euclid's *Elements*, into any country town in England and see if you can make a modern Athens of it. The Greek artists did not learn to put expression into their works, because Socrates had said that "statuary must represent the emotions of the soul by form;" but he said that they ought to do so because he had seen it done by Phidias and others. It was from the diligent study and contemplation of the "choicest forms of nature," and from the natural love of beauty and grandeur in the human breast, and not from "shreds and patches"

of philosophy, that they drew their conceptions of gods and men. Let us not, however, be thought hard on the metaphysics of the ancients : they were the first to propose these questions, and to feel the curiosity and the earnest desire to know what the *beautiful* and the *good* meant. If the will was not tantamount to the deed it was scarcely their fault ; and, perhaps, instead of blaming their partial success, we ought rather to take shame to ourselves for the little progress we have made, and the dubious light that has been shed upon such questions since. If the professor of sculpture had sought for the principles of beauty in the antique statues, instead of the *scholia* of the commentators, he probably might have found it to resolve itself (according, at least, to their peculiar and favourite view of it) into a certain symmetry of form, answering, in a great measure, to harmony of colouring, or of musical sounds. We do not here affect to lay down a metaphysical theory, but to criticise an historical fact. We are not bold enough to say that beauty in general depends on a regular gradation and correspondence of lines, but we may safely assert that Grecian beauty does. If we take any beautiful Greek statue we shall find that, seen in profile, the forehead and nose form nearly a perpendicular straight line ; and that, finely turned at that point, the lower part of the face falls by gentle and almost equal curves to the chin. The cheek is full and round, and the outline of the side of the face a general sloping line. In front, the eye-brows are straight, or greatly curved ; the eyelids full and round to match, answering to that of Belphebre, in Spenser—

“ Upon her eye-brows many graces set,
Under the shadow of her even brow.”

The space between the eye-brows is broad, and the two sides of the nose straight, and nearly parallel ; the nostrils form large and distinct curves ; the lips are full and even, the corners being large ; the chin is round and rather

short, forming, with the two sides of the face, a regular oval. The opposite to this, the Grecian model of beauty, is to be seen in the contour and features of the African face, where all the lines, instead of corresponding to, or melting into, one another, in a kind of *rhythmus* of form, are sharp, angular, and at cross purposes. Where strength and majesty were to be expressed by the Greeks, they adopted a greater squareness, but there was the same unity and correspondence of outline. Greek grace is harmony of movement. The *ideal* may be regarded as a certain predominant quality or character (this may be ugliness or deformity as well as beauty, as is seen in the forms of fauns and satyrs) diffused over all the parts of an object, and carried to the utmost pitch that our acquaintance with visible models and our conception of the imaginary object will warrant. It is extending our impressions farther, raising them higher than usual, from the *actual* to the *possible*.^{*} How far we can enlarge our discoveries from the one of these to the other, is a point of some nicety. In treating on this question, our author thus distinguishes the natural and the ideal styles:—

“The natural style may be defined thus: a representation of the human form, according to the distinction of sex and age, in action or repose, expressing the affections of the soul. The same words may be used to define the ideal style, but they must be followed by this addition—*selected from such perfect examples as may excite in our minds a conception of the preternatural*. By these definitions will be understood that the natural style is peculiar to humanity, and the ideal to spirituality and divinity.”

We should be inclined to say that the female divinities of the ancients were goddesses because they were *ideal*,

^{*} Verse and poetry has its source in this principle; it is the harmony of the soul imparted from the strong impulse of pleasure to language and to indifferent things; as a person hearing music walks in a sustained and measured step over uneven ground.

rather than that they were *ideal* because they belonged to the class of goddesses ; “ By their own beauty they were deified : ” of the difficulty of passing the line that separates the actual from the imaginary world, some test may be formed by the suggestion thrown out a little way back ; *viz.*, that the *ideal* is exemplified in systematising and enhancing any idea, whether of beauty or deformity, as in the case of the fauns and satyrs of antiquity. The expressing of depravity and grossness is produced here by approximating the human face and figure to that of the brute ; so that the mind runs along this line from one to the other, and carries the wished-for resemblance as far as it pleases. But both the extremes are equally well-known, equally objects of sight and observation, insomuch that there might be a literal substitution of the one for the other ; but, in the other case, of elevating character and portraying gods as men, one of the extremes is missing ; and the combining of the two is combining a positive image with an unknown abstraction. To represent a Jupiter or Apollo, we take the best species (as it seems to us), and select the best of that species : how are we to get beyond that *best*, without any given form or visible image to refer to, it is not easy to determine. The *ideal*, according to Mr. Flaxman, is the “ scale by which to heaven we do ascend ; ” but it is a hazardous undertaking to soar above reality, by embodying an abstraction. If the ancients could have seen the immortal gods with their bodily sense (as it was said that Jupiter had revealed himself to Pindar), they might have been enabled to give some reflection or shadow of their countenances to their human likenesses of them : otherwise poetry and philosophy lent their light in vain.

It is true, we may magnify the human figure to any extent we please, for that is a mechanical affair ; but how we are to add to our ideas of grace or grandeur beyond anything we have ever seen, merely by contemplating grace

and grandeur that we have never seen, is quite another matter. If we venture beyond the highest point of excellence of which we have any example we quit our hold of the natural, without being sure that we have laid our hands on what is truly divine; for that has no earthly image or representative—nature is the only rule or “legislator.” We may combine existing qualities, but this must be consistently, that is, such as are found combined in nature. Repose was given to the Olympian Jupiter to express majesty; because the greatest power was found to imply repose, and to produce its effects with the least effort. Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom, was represented young and beautiful; because wisdom was discovered not to be confined to age or ugliness. Not only the individual excellencies, but their bond of union, were sanctioned by the testimony of observation and experience. Bacchus is represented with full, exuberant features, with prominent lips, and a stern brow, as expressing a character of plentitude and bounty, and the tamer of savages and wild beasts. But this *ideal* conception is carried to the brink; the mould is full, and, with a very little more straining, it would overflow into caricature and distortion. Mercury has wings, which is merely a grotesque and fanciful combination of known images. Apollo was described by the poets (if not represented by the statuary) with a round, jocund face and golden locks, in allusion to the appearance of rays of the sun. This was an allegory, and would be soon turned to abuse in sculpture or painting. Thus we see how circumscribed and uncertain the province of the *ideal* is, when once it advances from the most perfect nature to spirituality and divinity! We suspect the improved deity often fell short of the heroic original; and the Venus was only the most beautiful woman of the time, with diminished charms and a finer name added to her. With respect to *ideal* expression, it is superior to common *every-day* expression, no doubt; that is, it must be raised

to correspond with lofty characters placed in striking situations; but it is tame and feeble compared with what those characters would exhibit in the supposed circumstances. The expressions in the *Incendio del Borgo* are striking and grand; but could we see the expression of terror in the commonest face in real danger of being burnt to death, it would put all imaginary expressions to shame and flight.

Mr Flaxman makes an attempt to vindicate the golden ornaments, and eyes of precious stones, in the ancient statues, as calculated to add to the awe of the beholder, and inspire a belief in their preternatural power. In this point of view, or as a matter of religious faith, we are not tenacious on the subject, any more than we object to the wonder-working images and moving eyes of the patron saints in popish churches. But the question, as it regards the fine arts in general, is curious, and treated at some length and with considerable intricacy and learning by the lecturer.

He observes that adding flesh-colour to statues gives an appearance of death to them, *because the colour of life without motion argues a suspension of the vital powers*. The same might be said of pictures which have colour without motion; but who would contend that, because a chalk drawing has the tints of flesh (denoting circulation) super-added to it, this gives it the appearance of a person in fits, or of death? On the contrary, Sir Joshua Reynolds makes it an objection to coloured statues that, as well as wax-work, they were too much like life. This was always the scope and "butt end" of his theories and rules on art, that it should avoid coming in too close contact with nature. Still we are not sure that this is not the true reason—*viz.*, that the imitation ought not to amount to a deception, nor be effected by gross or identical means. We certainly hate all wax-work, of whatever description; and the idea of colouring a statue gives us a nausea; but, as is the case with most bigoted people, the clearness of our reasoning

does not keep pace with the strength of our prejudices. It is easy to repeat that the object of painting is colour and form, while the object of sculpture is form alone; and, to ring the changes on the purity, severity, and abstract truth of sculpture; the question returns as before: Why should sculpture be more pure, more severe, more abstracted than anything else? The only clue we can suggest is that, from the immense pains bestowed in sculpture on mere form, or in giving solidity and permanence, this predominant feeling becomes an exclusive and unsociable one, and the mind rejects every addition of a more fleeting or superficial kind as an excrescence and an impertinence. The form is hewn out of the solid rock; to tint and daub it over with a flimsy, perishable substance is a mockery and a desecration where the work itself is likely to last for ever. A statue is the utmost possible development of form, and that on which the whole powers and faculties of the artist have been bent. It has a right, then, by the laws of intellectual creation to stand alone in that simplicity and unsullied nakedness in which it has been wrought. *Tangible form* (the primary idea) is blind, averse to colour. A statue, if it were coloured at all, ought to be inlaid, that is, done in mosaic, where the colour would be part of the solid materials. But this would be an undertaking beyond human power. Where art has performed all that it can do, why require it to begin its task again? Or if the addition is to be made carelessly and lightly, it is unworthy of the subject. Colour is at best the mask of form: paint on a statue is like paint on a real face—it is not of a piece with the work, it does not belong to the face, and justly obtains the epithet of *meretricious*.

Mr Flaxman, in comparing the progress of ancient and modern sculpture, does not shrink from doing justice to the latter. He gives the preference to scriptural over classical subjects; and, in one passage, seems half inclined to turn short round on the Greek mythology and morality,

and to treat all these heathen gods and goddesses as a set of very improper people:—as to the Roman bas-reliefs, triumphs and processions, he dismisses them as no better than so many vulgar, “military gazettes.” He, with due doubt and deference, places Michael Angelo almost above the ancients. His statues will not bear out this claim; and we have no sufficient means of judging of their paintings. In his separate groups and figures in the *Sistine Chapel*, there is, indeed, we think, a conscious vastness of purpose, a mighty movement, like the breath of Creation upon the waters, that we see in no other works, ancient or modern. The forms of his Prophets and Sybils are like moulds of *thought*. Mr Flaxman is also strenuous in his praises of the *Last Judgment*; but on that we shall be silent, as we are not converts to his opinion. Michael Angelo's *David* and *Bacchus*, done when he was young, are clumsy and unmeaning: even the grandeur of his *Moses* is confined to the horns and beard. The only works of his in sculpture which sustain Mr Flaxman's praise, are those in the chapel of Lorenzo de Medici at Florence; and these are of undoubted force and beauty.

After the glossiness, and splendour, and gorgeous perfection of Grecian art, the whole seems to sink into littleness and insignificance, compared with the interest we feel in the period of its restoration, and in the rude but mighty efforts it made to reach to its former height and grandeur;—with more anxious thoughts, and with a more fearful experience to warn it,—with the ruin of the old world crumbling around it, and the new one emerging out of the gloom of Gothic barbarism and ignorance—taught to look from the out-stretd map of time and change beyond it—and, if less critical in matter objects, commanding a bolder and more extended range, like the bursting the bands of death asunder, or the first dawn of light and peace after darkness and the tempest!

ROYAL ACADEMY.*

THE choice of a President for this Society is one of some nicety. Where there is not any individual taking an indisputable lead in art, it requires a combination and balance of qualities not always easily to be met with. The President of the great body of art in this country ought not merely to be eminent in his profession, but a man of gentlemanly manners, of good person, and respectable character, and standing well in the opinion of his brother artists. He should be a person free from peculiarity of temper and party spirit, and able to represent the elegant arts, of which he stands at the head, as the last ostensible link connecting scientific pursuit with the enlightened taste and aristocratic refinements of their immediate patrons. The choice has fallen on Mr Shée,† and his honours will sit well upon him. This artist has been long a favourite with the public in the most popular branch of his art, and is scarcely less distinguished by his occasional brilliant effusions as a poet, and his accomplishments as a man. The characteristics of Mr Shée's style of portrait are vivacity of expression, facility of execution, and clearness of colouring. He has attempted history with true success. Perhaps, if he had done more in this way, it might have been to his own detriment; and the habits and studies

* Printed from the autograph MS. in the Editor's possession. The following note is written at the foot of the paper by Mr C. Cowden Clarke:—"An article written for me in the *Atlas* newspaper, by William Hazlitt. The autograph is his, and I was at his elbow while he wrote it, which occupied him about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour."

† Mr Martin A. Shée was elected President in 1830.

of the historical painter, immersed in a world of retirement and abstraction, are such as hardly serve for an introduction to situations of ornament and distinction in social life. Mr Wilkie's merits, as a painter of familiar subjects, have procured him the deserved honour of being appointed *Historical Painter* to the King; the admirable busts of Chantrey might also have been thrown into the opposite scale; but upon the whole, the judgment of the public will not take the laurel from the head where the hands of the Academy have placed it. If we might hint a fault, where so much praise is due, it would be by expressing a wish that Mr Shee could more boldly say with Rembrandt *Je suis peintre, non pas téméraire*. His tones are too pure, approaching too nearly to virgin tints. For one department of his office the new President is happily qualified—we mean the delivery of lectures from the Chair of the Royal Academy. The art of painting is dumb, but Mr Shee can borrow the aid of a sister Muse.

PART II.

SKETCHES OF THE PRINCIPAL PICTURE-
GALLERIES IN ENGLAND, ETC.*

MR ANGERSTEIN'S COLLECTION.

On! Art, lovely Art! "balm of hurt minds, chief nourisher in life's feast, great Nature's second course!" Time's treasurer, the unsullied mirror of the mind of man! thee we invoke, and not in vain, for we find thee here retired in thy plenitude and thy power! The walls are dark with beauty; they frown severest grace. The eye is not caught by glitter and varnish; we see the pictures by their own internal light. This is not a bazaar, a raree-show of art, a Noah's ark of all the Schools, marching out in endless procession; but a sanctuary, a holy of holies, collected by taste, sacred to fame, enriched by the rarest products of genius. For the number of pictures, Mr Angerstein's is the finest gallery, perhaps, in the world. We feel no sense of littleness: the attention is never distracted for a moment, but concentrated on a few pictures of first-rate excellence. Many of these *chefs-d'œuvre* might occupy the spectator for a whole morning; yet they do not interfere with the pleasure derived from each other—so much consistency of style is there in the midst of variety!

We know of no greater treat than to be admitted freely

* First printed in 1824.—ED.

to a Collection of this sort, where the mind reposes with full confidence in its feelings of admiration, and finds that idea and love of conceivable beauty, which it has cherished perhaps for a whole life, reflected from every object around it. It is a cure (for the time at least) for low-thoughted cares and uneasy passions. We are abstracted to another sphere: we breathe empyrean air; we enter into the minds of Raffaele, of Titian, of Poussin, of the Caracci, and look at nature with their eyes; we live in time past, and seem identified with the permanent forms of things. The business of the world at large, and its pleasures, appear like a vanity and an impertinence. What signify the hubbub, the shifting scenery, the fantoccini figures, the folly, the idle fashions without, when compared with the solitude, the silence, the speaking looks, the unfolding forms within?—Here is the mind's true home. The contemplation of truth and beauty is the proper object for which we were created, which calls forth the most intense desires of the soul, and of which it never tires. A capital print shop (Molteni's or Colnaghi's) is a point to aim at in a morning's walk—a relief and satisfaction in the motly confusion, the littleness, the vulgarity of common life: but a print-shop has but a mean, cold, meagre, petty appearance, after coming out of a fine Collection of Pictures. We want the *size of life*, the marble flesh, the rich tones of nature, the diviner expanded expression. Good prints are, no doubt, better than bad pictures; or prints, generally speaking, are better than pictures; for we have more prints of good pictures than of bad ones; yet they are for the most part but hints, loose memorandums, outlines in little of what the painter has done. How often, in turning over a number of choice engravings, do we tantalise ourselves by thinking “what a head *that* must be,”—in wondering what colour a piece of drapery is of, green or black,—in wishing in vain, to know the exact tone of the sky in a particular corner of the picture!

Throw open the folding-doors of a fine Collection, and you see all you have desired realised at a blow—the bright originals starting up in their own proper shape, clad with flesh and blood, and teeming with the first conception of the painter's mind! The disadvantage of pictures is that they cannot be multiplied to any extent, like books or prints; but this, in another point of view, operates probably as an advantage, by making the sight of a fine original picture an event so much the more memorable, and the impression so much the deeper. A visit to a genuine Collection is like going a pilgrimage—it is an act of devotion performed at the shrine of Art! It is as if there were but one copy of a book in the world, locked up in some curious casket, which, by special favour, we had been permitted to open, and peruse (as we must) with unaccustomed relish. The words would, in that case, leave stings in the mind of the reader, and every letter appear of gold. The ancients, before the invention of printing, were nearly in the same situation, with respect to books, that we are with regard to pictures; and at the revival of letters, we find the same unmingled satisfaction or fervid enthusiasm manifested in the pursuit or the discovery of an old manuscript, that connoisseurs still feel in the purchase and possession of an antique cameo or a fine specimen of the Italian school of painting. Literature was not then cheap and vulgar, nor was there what is called a *reading public*; and the pride of intellect, like the pride of art or the pride of birth, was confined to the privileged few!

We sometimes, in viewing a celebrated Collection, meet with an old favourite, a *first love* in such matters, that we have not seen for many years, which greatly enhances the delight. We have, perhaps, pampered our imaginations with it all that time; its charms have sunk deep into our minds; we wish to see it once more, that we may confirm our judgment, and renew our vows. The *Susannah* and

the Elders at Mr Angerstein's [28]* was one of those that came upon us under these circumstances. We had seen it formerly, among other visions of our youth, in the Orleans Collection,—where we used to go and look at it by the hour together, till our hearts thrilled with its beauty, and our eyes were filled with tears. How often had we thought of it since, how often spoken of it!—There it was still, the same lovely phantom as ever—not as when Rousseau met Madame de Warens, after a lapse of twenty years, who was grown old and wrinkled—but as if the young Jewish beauty had been just surprised in that unguarded spot—crouching down in one corner of the picture, the face turned back with a mingled expression of terror, shame, and unconquerable sweetness, and the whole figure, (with the arms crossed)† shrinking into itself with bewitching grace and modesty! It is by Ludovico Caracci, and is worthy of his name, from its truth and purity of design, its expression and its mellow depth of tone. Of the *Elders*, one is represented in the attitude of advancing towards her, while the other beckons her to rise. We know of no painter who could have improved upon the *Susannah*, except Correggio, who, with all his capricious blandishments and wreathed angelic smiles, would hardly have given the same natural unaffected grace, the same perfect womanhood.

There is but one other picture in the Collection that strikes us, as a matter of taste or fancy, like this; and that is the *Silvanus teaching Young Apollo to play on the pipe* [24]‡:—a small oblong picture, executed in distemper, by Annibal Caracci. The old preceptor is very fine, with a jolly, beaming, pampered look of approbation, half inclining

* The figures within brackets indicate the present position of these pictures in the National Gallery.

† The artist's memory, for he never took notes, here fails him; the arms are not crossed.

‡ Mrs Jackson concurs with Mr Landseer in thinking that this youthful pupil is Bacchus, not Apollo.

to the brute, half conscious of the god; but it is the Apollo that constitutes the charm of the picture, and is indeed divine. The whole figure is full of simple careless grace, laughing in youth and beauty; he holds the Pan's-pipe in both hands, looking up with timid wonder; and the expression of delight and surprise at the sounds he produces is not to be surpassed. The only image we would venture to compare with it for innocent, artless voluptuousness, is that of the shepherd-boy in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, "piping as though he should never be old!" A comparison of this sort, we believe, may be made, in spite of the proverb, without injustice to the painter or the poet. Both gain by it. The idea conveyed by the one, perhaps, receives an additional grace and lustre, while a more beautiful moral sentiment hovers round the other, from thinking of them in this casual connection. If again it be asked, *Which is the most admirable?*—we should answer, Both are equally exquisite in their way, and yield the imagination all the pleasure it is capable of—and should decline giving an invidious preference to either. *The cup can only be full.* The young shepherd in the *Arcadia* wants no outward grace to recommend him; the stripling god no hidden charm of expression. The language of painting and poetry is intelligible enough to mortals; the spirit of both is divine, and far too good for him who, instead of enjoying it to the utmost height, would find an unwelcome flaw in either. The *Silenus and Apollo* has something of a Raffaellesque air, with a mixture of Correggio's arch sensibility—there is nothing of Titian in the colouring—yet Annibal Carracci was in theory a deserter from the first to the two last of these masters; and swore with an oath, in a letter to his uncle Ludovico, that "they were the only true painters!"

We should nearly have exhausted our stock of enthusiasm in descanting on these two compositions, in almost any other case; but there is no danger of this in the present

instance. If we were at any loss in this respect, we should only have to turn to the large picture of the *Raising of Lazarus*, by Sebastian del Piombo ; [1]

—————“ and still walking under,
Finding new matter to look up and wonder.”

We might dwell on the masterly strength of the drawing, the gracefulness of the principal female figures, the high-wrought execution, the deep, rich, *mosaic* colouring, the massiness and bustle of the background. We think this one of the best pictures on so large a scale that we are anywhere acquainted with. The whole management of the design has a very noble and imposing effect, and each part severally will bear the closest scrutiny. It is a magnificent structure built of solid and valuable materials. The artist has not relied merely on the extent of his canvas, or the importance of his subject, for producing a striking result—the effect is made out by an aggregate of excellent parts. The hands, the feet, the drapery, the heads, the features, are all fine. There is some satisfaction in looking at a large historical picture such as this : for you really gain in quantity without losing in quality, and have a studious imitation of individual nature, combined with masculine invention and the comprehensive arrangement of an interesting story. The Lazarus is very fine and bold. The flesh is well-laked, dingy, and ready to crumble from the touch, when it is liberated from its dread confinement to have life and motion impressed on it again. He seems impatient of restraint, gazes eagerly about him, and looks out from his shrouded prison on this new world with hurried amazement, as if Death had scarcely yet resigned his power over the senses. We would wish our artists to look at the legs and feet of this figure, and see how correctness of finishing and a greatness of *gusto* in design are compatible with, and set off, each other. The attendant female figures have a peculiar

grace and becoming dignity, both of expression and attitude. They are in a style something between Michael Angelo and Parmegiano. They take a deep interest in the scene, but it is with the air of composure proper to the sex, who are accustomed by nature and duty to works of charity and compassion. The head of the old man, kneeling behind Christ, is an admirable study of drawing, execution, and character. The Christ himself is grave and earnest, with a noble and impressive countenance; but the figure wants that commanding air which ought to belong to one possessed of preternatural power, and in the act of displaying it. Too much praise cannot be given to the background—the green and white draperies of some old people at a distance, which are as airy as they are distinct—the buildings like tombs—and the different groups and processions of figures, which seem to make life almost as grave and solemn a business as death itself. This picture is said by some to have been designed by Michael Angelo, and painted by Sebastian del Piombo, in rivalry of some of Raffaele's works. It was in the Orleans Gallery.

Near this large historical composition stands (or is suspended in a case) a single head, by Raffaele, of Pope Julius II. [27]. It is in itself a Collection—a world of thought and character. There is a prodigious weight and gravity of look, combined with calm self-possession and easiness of temper. It has the cast of an English countenance, which Raffaele's portraits often have, Titian's never. In Raffaele's the mind or the body frequently prevails; in Titian's you always see the soul—faces “which pale passion loves.” Look at the Music-piece by Titian [3], close by in this Collection—it is “all ear,”—the expression is evanescent as the sounds—the features are seen in a sort of dim *chiaroscuro*, as if the confused impressions of another sense intervened—and you might easily suppose some of the performers to have been engaged the night before in

"Mask or midnight serenade,
Which the starved lover to his mistress sings,
Best quitted with disdain."

We like this picture of a Concert the best of the three by Titian in the same room. The other two are a Gany-mede [32], and a Venus and Adonis [34]; the last does not appear to us from the hand of Titian.

The ruddy, *bronzed* colouring of Raffaele generally takes off from any appearance of nocturnal watching and languid hectic passion! The portrait of Julius II. is finished to a great nicety. The hairs of the beard, the fringe on the cap, are done by minute and careful touches of the pencil. In seeing the labour, the conscientious and modest pains, which this great painter bestowed upon his smallest works, we cannot help being struck with the number and magnitude of those he left behind him. When we have a single portrait placed before us, that might seem to have taken half a year to complete it, we wonder how the same painter could find time to execute his cartoons, the compartments of the Vatican, and a thousand other matchless works. The same account serves for both. The more we do, the more we can do. Our leisure (though it may seem a paradox) is in proportion to our industry. The same habit of intense application, which led our artist to bestow as much pains and attention on the study of a single head as if his whole reputation had depended on it, enabled him to act about the greatest works with alacrity, and to finish them with ease. If he had done anything he undertook to do in a slovenly disreputable manner, he would (upon the same principle) have lain idle half his time. Zeal and diligence, in this view, make life, short as it is, long. Neither did Raffaele, it should seem, found his historical pretensions on his incapacity to paint a good portrait. On the contrary, the latter here looks very much like the corner-stone of the historical edifice. Nature did not *put him out*. He was not too great a genius to copy what he saw. He probably

thought that a deference to nature is the beginning of art, and that the highest eminence is scaled by single steps!

On the same stand as the portrait of Julius II. is the much vaunted Correggio—the *Christ in the Garden*. [76]* We would not give a farthing for it. The drapery of the Christ is highly finished in a silver and azure tone—but high finishing is not all we ask from Correggio. It is more worthy of Carlo Dolce. Lest we should forget it, we may mention here that the admired portrait of Gevartius [52]† was gone to be copied at Somerset House. The Academy have then, at length, fallen into the method pursued at the British Gallery, of recommending the students to copy from the OLD MASTERS. Well—*better late than never!* This same portrait is not, we think, the truest specimen of Vandyck. It has not his mild, pensive, somewhat effeminate, cast of colour and expression. His best portraits have an air of faded gentility about them. The Gevartius has too many streaks of blood-colour, too many marks of the pencil, to convey an exact idea of Vandyck's characteristic excellence; though it is a fine imitation of Rubens's florid manner. Vandyck's most striking portraits are those which look just like a gentleman or lady seen in a looking-glass, and neither more nor less.

Of the Claudes, we prefer the St Ursula—the [30] *Embarking of the Five Thousand Virgins*—to the others. The water is exquisite; and the sails of the vessels glittering in the morning sun, and the blue flags placed against the trees, which seem like an opening into the sky behind—so sparkling is the effect of this ambiguity in colouring—are in Claude's most perfect manner. The Altieri Claude is one of his noblest and most classical compositions, with

* The original picture by Correggio is in the possession of the Duke of Wellington. That in the National Gallery is only a copy.

† Or, more correctly, of Cornelius Vander Geest, an intimate friend of Vandyck. The authentic engraving from the real portrait of Gevartius differs materially from the present picture.

towers, and trees, and streams, and flocks, and herds, and distant sunny vales,

“Where universal Pan,
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Leads on the eternal spring :”

but the effect of the execution has been deadened and rendered flat by time or ill-usage. There is a dull formal appearance, as if the different masses of sky, of water, &c., were laid on with plates of tin or lead. This is not a general defect in Claude: his landscapes have the greatest quantity of inflexion, the most delicate brilliancy, of all others. A lady had been making a good copy of the *Seaport* [14], which is a companion to the one we have described. We do not think these Claudes, famous as they are, equal to Lord Egremont's *Jacob and Laban*; to the *Enchanted Castle*; to a green vernal Landscape, which was in Walsh Porter's Collection, and which was the very finest we ever saw [6]; nor to some others that have appeared from time to time in the British Institution. We are sorry to make this, which may be thought an ill-natured, remark; but, though we have a great respect for Mr Angerstein's taste, we have a greater for Claude Lorraine's reputation. Let any persons admire these specimens of his art as much as they will (and the more they admire them, the more we shall be gratified), and then we will tell them, he could do far finer things than these!

There is one Rembrandt and one N. Poussin. The Rembrandt (the *Wine-taken in Adultery*) [15], prodigious in colouring, in light and shade, in pencilling, in solemn effect; but that is nearly all—

“Of outward things
Elaborate,—I inward have quest.”

Nevertheless, it is worth any money. The Christ has considerable seriousness and dignity of aspect. The marble pavement, of which the light is even dazzling; the figures

of the two Rabbis to the right, radiant with crimson, green, and azure; the background, which seems like some rich oil-colour smeared over a ground of gold, and where the eye staggers on from one abyss of security to another,—place this picture in the first rank of Rembrandt's wonderful performances. If this extraordinary genius was the most literal and vulgar of draughtsmen, he was the most *ideal* of colourists. When Annibal Caracci vowed to God, that Titian and Correggio were the only true painters, he had not seen Rembrandt;—if he had, he would have added him to the list. The Poussin is a *Dance of Bacchanals* [42]: theirs are not “pious orgies.” It is, however, one of this master's finest pictures, both in the spirit of the execution, and the ingenuity and *equivoque* of the invention. If the purity of the drawing will make amends for the impurity of the design, it may pass: assuredly the same subject, badly executed, would not be endured; but the life of mind, the dexterity of combination displayed in it, supply the want of decorum. The old adage, that “Vice, by losing all its grossness, loses half its evil,” seems chiefly applicable to pictures. Thus a naked figure, that has nothing but its nakedness to recommend it, is not fit to be hung up in decent apartments. If it is a Nymph by Titian, Correggio's Io, we no longer think of its being naked; but merely of its sweetness, its beauty, its naturalness. So far art, as it is intellectual, has a refinement and an extreme unction of its own. Indifferent pictures, like dull people, must absolutely be moral! We suggest this as a hint to those persons, of more gallantry than discretion, who think that to have an indecent daub hanging up in one corner of the room is proof of a liberality of *gusto* and a considerable progress in *virtù*. *Tout au contraire.*

We have a clear, brown, woody *Landscape* by Gaspar Poussin [161], in his fine determined style of pencilling, which gives to earth its solidity and to the air its proper attributes. There are, perhaps, no landscapes that excel

his in this fresh, healthy look of nature. One might say that wherever his pencil loves to haunt, "the air is delicate." We forgot to mention a *St. John in the Wilderness*, by A. Caracci [25], which has much of the autumnal tone, the "sear and yellow leaf," of Titian's landscape compositions. A *Rape of the Sabines* [38] in the inner room by Rubens, is, we think, the most tasteless picture in the Collection: to see plump, florid viragos struggling with bearded ruffians, and tricked out in the flounces, furbelows, and finery of the court of Louis XIV., is preposterous. But there is another Rubens in the outer room which, though fantastical and quaint, has qualities to redeem all faults. It is an allegory of himself and his three wives, as a St. George and Holy Family, with his children as Christ and St. John, playing with a lamb [67]: in which he has contrived to bring together all that is rich in antique dresses (black as jet and shining like diamonds), transparent in flesh-colour, agreeable in landscape, unfettered in composition. The light streams from rosy clouds; the breeze curls the branches of the trees in the background, and plays on the clear complexions of the various scattered group. It is one of this painter's most splendid, and at the same time most solid and sharply finished, productions.

Mr Wilkie's *Athenae Door* [122] is here, and deserves to be here. Still it is not his best; though there are some very pleasing rattle figures and some touching passages in it. As in his *Blind Man's-buff*, the groups are too straggling, and spread over too large a surface of bare foreground, which Mr Wilkie does not paint well. It looks more like putty than earth or clay. The artist has a better eye for individual detail than for the general tone of objects. Mr Liston's face in this "flock of drunkards" is a smiling failure.

A portrait of Hogarth by himself [112], and Sir Joshua's half length of Lord Heathfield [111], hang in the same room. The last of these is certainly a fine picture, well

composed, richly coloured, with considerable character and a look of nature. Nevertheless, our artist's pictures, seen among standard works, have (to speak it plainly) something old-womanish about them. By their obsolete and affected air, they remind one of antiquated ladies of quality, and are a kind of Duchess-Dowagers in the art—somewhere between the living and the dead.

Hogarth's series of the *Marriage-à-la-Mode* [113-118], (the most delicately painted of all his pictures, and admirably painted they certainly are), concludes the *Catalogue Raisonné* of this Collection.* A study of Heads, by Correggio [37], and some of Mr Fuseli's stupendous figures from his Milton Gallery, are on the staircase.

* The reader will find an essay on this subject in the present volume.

THE DULWICH GALLERY.

It was on the 5th of November that we went to see this Gallery. The morning was mild, calm, pleasant : it was a day to ruminate on the object we had in view. It was the time of year

“ When yellow leaves, or few, or none do hang
Upon the branches ; ”

their scattered gold was strongly contrasted with the dark green spiral shoots of the cedar trees that skirt the road : the sun shone faint and watery, as if smiling his last : Winter gently let go the hand of Summer, and the green fields, wet with the mist, anticipated the return of Spring. At the end of a beautiful little village, Dulwich College appeared in view, with modest state, yet mindful of the olden time ; and the name of Allen and his compeers rushed full upon the memory ! How many races of school-boys have played within its walls, or stammered out a lesson, or sauntered away their vacant hours in its shade : yet, not one Shakespeare is there to be found among them all ! The boy is clothed and fed, and gets through his accidence ; but no trace of his youthful learning, any more than of his saffron livery, is to be met with in the man. Genius is not to be “ constrained by mastery.” Nothing comes of these endowments and foundations for learning ; you might as well make dirt-pies, or build houses with cards. Yet something *does* come of them too—a retreat for age, a dream in youth—a feeling in the air around them, the memory of the past, the hope of what will never be.

Sweet are the studies of the school-boy, delicious his idle hours ! Fresh and gladsome is his waking, balmy are his slumbers, book-pillowed ! He wears a green and yellow livery perhaps ; but “green and yellow melancholy” comes not near him, or, if it does, is tempered with youth and innocence ! To thumb his Eutropius, or to knuckle down at taw, are to him equally delightful ; for whatever stirs the blood, or inspires thought in him, quickens the pulse of life and joy. He has only to feel, in order to be happy ; pain turns smiling from him, and sorrow is only a softer kind of pleasure. Each sensation is but an unfolding of his new being ; care, age, sickness, are idle words ; the musty records of antiquity look glossy in his sparkling eye, and he clasps immortality as his future bride ! The coming years hurt him not—he hears their sound afar off, and is glad. See him there, the urchin seated in the sun, with a book in his hand, and the wall at his back. He has a thicker wall before him—the wall that parts him from the future. He sees not the archers taking aim at his peace ; he knows not the hands that are to mangle his bosom. He stirs not, he still pores upon his book, and as he reads, a slight, hectic flush passes over his cheek, for he sees the letters that compose the word FAME glitter on the page, and his eyes swim, and he thinks that he will one day write a book, and have his name repeated by thousands of readers, and assume a certain signature, and write *Essays and Criticisms* in a LONDON MAGAZINE, as a consummation of felicity scarcely to be believed. Come hither, thou poor little fellow, and let us change places with thee, if thou wilt ; here take the pen, and finish this article, and sign what name you please to it ; so that we may but change our dress for yours, and sit shivering in the sun, and con over our little task, and feed poor, and lie hard, and be contented and happy, and think what a fine thing it is to be an author, and dream of immortality, and sleep o’ nights !

There is something affecting and monastic in the sight of this little nursery of learning, simple and retired as it stands, just on the verge of the metropolis, and in the midst of modern improvements. There is a chapel, containing a copy of *Raffaello's Transfiguration*, by Giulio Romano ; but the great attraction to curiosity at present is the Collection of pictures left to the College by the late Sir Francis Bourgeois, who is buried in a mausoleum close by. He once (it is said) spent an agreeable day here in company with the Masters of the College and some other friends ; and he determined in consequence upon this singular mode of testifying his gratitude and his respect. Perhaps, also, some such idle thoughts as we have here recorded might have mingled with this resolution. The contemplation and the approach of death might have been softened to his mind by being associated with the hopes of childhood ; and he might wish that his remains should repose, in monumental state, amidst "the innocence and simplicity of poor *Charity Boys* !" Might it not have been so ?

The pictures are 360 in number, and are hung on the walls of a large gallery, built for the purpose, and divided into five compartments. They certainly looked better in their old places, at the house of Mr Descentius (the original collector), where they were distributed into a number of small rooms, and seen separately and close to the eye. They are mostly cabinet pictures ; and not only does the height, at which many of them are necessarily hung to cover a large space, lessen the effect, but the number distracts and deadens the attention. Besides, the skylights are so contrived as to "shed a dim" though not a "religious" light upon them. At our entrance, we were first struck by our old friend the Cuyp^s ; and just beyond, caught a glimpse of that fine female head by Carlo Maratti,* giving us a welcome with cordial glances. May we not exclaim—

* The only picture by Carlo Maratti, in the Dulwich Gallery, is a Holy Family, No. 342.

“What a delicious breath *painting* sends forth !
The violet-bed 's not sweeter.”

A fine gallery of pictures is a sort of illustration of Berkeley's Theory of Matter and Spirit. It is like a palace of thought—another universe, built of air, of shadows, of colours. Everything seems “palpable to feeling as to sight.” Substances turn to shadows by the painter's alchemic touch ; shadows harden into substances. “The eye is made the fool of the other senses, or else worth all the rest.” The material is in some sense embodied in the immaterial, or at least we see all things in a sort of intellectual mirror. The world of art is an enchanting deception. We discover distance in a glazed surface ; a province is contained in a foot of canvas ; a thin evanescent tint gives the form and pressure of rocks and trees ; an inert shape has life and motion in it. Time stands still, and the dead re-appear, by means of this “so potent art !”

Look at the Cuypp next the door [9]. It is woven of ethereal hues. A soft mist is on it, a veil of subtle air. The tender green of the valleys beyond, the gleaming lake, the purple light of the hills, have an effect like the down on an unripe nectarine. You may lay your finger on the canvas ; but miles of dewy vapour and sunshine are between you and the objects you survey. It is almost needless to point out that the cattle and figures in the foreground, like dark, transparent spots, give an immense relief to the perspective. This is, we think, the finest Cuypp perhaps in the world. The landscape opposite to it (in the same room) by the same painter [83], has a richer colouring and a stronger contrast of light and shade, but it has not that tender bloom of a spring morning (so delicate, yet so powerful in its effect) which the other possesses. *Two Horses*, by the same [156], is another admirable specimen of this excellent painter. It is hard to say which is most true to nature—the sleek, well-fed look of the bay horse, or the bone and spirit of the dappled iron-grey one,

or the face of the man who is busy fastening a girth. Nature is scarcely more faithful to itself than this delightfully *unmannered*, unaffected picture is to it.

In the same room there are several good Tenierses, and a small *Head of an Old Man*, by Rembrandt [189], which is as smoothly finished as a miniature. No. 54, *Interior of an Ale-house*, by Adrian Brouwer, almost gives one a sick headache; particularly the face and figure of the man leaning against the door, overcome with "potations pottle deep." Brouwer united the depth and richness of Ostade to the spirit and felicity of Teniers. No. 105, *Sleeping Nymph and Cupid*, and 14, *Nymph and Satyr*, by Poelemberg, are not pictures to our taste. Why should any one make it a rule never to paint anything but this one subject? Was it to please himself or others? The one shows bad taste, the other wrong judgment. The grossness of the selection is hardly more offensive than the finalness of the execution. No. 337, a *Mater Dolorosa*, by Carlo Dolce, is a very good specimen of this master; but the expression has too great a mixture of piety and pauperism in it. It is not altogether spiritual.

No. 27, *A School with Girls at work*, by G. M. Crespi, is a most rabblishy performance, and has the look of a modern picture. It was, no doubt, painted in the fashion of the time, and is now old-fashioned. Everything has this modern, or rather uncouth and obsolete, look which, besides the temporary and local circumstances, has not the free look of nature. Dress a figure in what costume you please (however fantastic, however barbarous), but add the expression which is common to all faces, the properties that are common to all drapery in its elementary principles, and the picture will belong to all times and places. It is not the addition of individual circumstances, but the omission of general truth, that makes the little, the deformed, and the short-lived in art. No. 57, *Idolatrian in the Desert*, a sketch by Sir Francis Bourgeois, is a proof of this remark.

There are no details, nor is there any appearance of permanence or stability about it. It seems to have been painted yesterday, and to labour under premature decay. It has a look of being half done, and you have no wish to see it finished. No. 94, *Interior of a Cathedral*, by Saenredam, is curious and fine. From one end of the perspective to the other—and back again—would make a morning's walk.

In the SECOND ROOM, No. 75, a *Sea Storm*, by Backhuysen, and No. 92, *A Calm*, by W. Vandervelde, are equally excellent, the one for its gloomy turbulence, and the other for its glassy smoothness. No. 30, *Landscape with Cattle and Figures*, is by Both, who is, we confess, no great favourite of ours. We do not like his straggling branches of trees without masses of foliage, continually running up into the sky, merely to let in the landscape beyond. No. 37, *Blowing Hot and Cold*, by Jordaens, is as fine a picture as need be painted. It is full of character, of life, and pleasing colour. It is rich and not gross. No. 87, *Portrait of a Lady*, said in the printed Catalogue to be by Andrea Sacchi, is surely by Carlo Maratti, to whom it used to be given. It has great beauty, great elegance, great expression, and great brilliancy of execution; but everything in it belongs to a more polished style of art than Andrea Sacchi. Be this as it may, it is one of the most perfect pictures in the collection. Of the portraits of known individuals in this room, we wish to say but little, for we can say nothing good. That of *John Kemble*, by Beechy [153], is perhaps the most direct and manly. In this room is Rubens's *Samson and Delilah* [168], a coarse daub—at least it looks so between two pictures by Vandyck, *Charity* [124], and a *Madonna and Infant Christ* [135]. That painter probably never produced anything more complete than these two compositions. They have the softness of air, the solidity of marble: the pencil appears to float and glide over the features of the face, the

folds of the drapery, with easy volubility, but to mark everything with a precision, a force, a grace indescribable. Truth seems to hold the pencil, and elegance to guide it. The attitudes are exquisite, and the expression all but divine. It is not like Raffaele's, it is true—but whose else was? Vandyck was born in Holland, and lived most of his time in England! There are several capital pictures of horses, &c., by Wouvermans in the same room, particularly the one with a hay-cart loading on the top of a rising ground [53]. The composition is as striking and pleasing as the execution is delicate. There is immense knowledge and character in Wouvermans' horses—an ear, an eye turned round, a cropped tail, give you their history and thoughts—but from the want of a little arrangement, his figures look too often like spots on a dark ground. When they are properly relieved and disentangled from the rest of the composition, there is an appearance of great life and bustle in his pictures. His horses, however, have too much of the *manège* in them—he seldom gets beyond the camp or the riding-school.

This room is rich in master-pieces. Here is the *Jacob's Dream*, by Rembrandt [179], with that sleeping figure, thrown like a bundle of clothes in one corner of the picture, by the side of some stunted bushes, and with those winged shapes hovering above, not human, nor angelical, but bird-like, dream-like, treading on clouds, ascending, descending, through the realms of endless light, that loses itself in infinite space! No one else could ever grapple with this subject, or stamp it on the willing canvas in its gorgeous obscurity, but Rembrandt! Here also is the *St Barbara* of Rubens [204], fleeing from her persecutors; a noble design, as if she were scaling the steps of some high overhanging turret, moving majestically on, with Fear before her, Death behind her, and Martyrdom crowning her: and here is an eloquent landscape by the same master-hand [207], the subject of which is a shepherd piping his

flock homeward through a narrow defile, with a graceful group of autumnal trees waving on the edge of the declivity above, and the rosy evening light streaming through the clouds on the green moist landscape in the still lengthening distance. Here (to pass from one kind of excellence to another with kindly interchange) is a clear sparkling *Water-fall*, by Ruysdael [145], and Hobbema's *Water Mill* [131], with the wheels in motion, and the ducks paddling in the restless stream. Is not this a sad anti-climax, from Jacob's Dream to a picture of a Water-Mill? We do not know, and we should care as little, could we but paint either of the pictures.

“Entire affection scorneth nicer hands.”

If a picture is admirable in its kind, we do not give ourselves much trouble about the subject. Could we paint as well as Hobbema, we should not envy Rembrandt: nay, even as it is, while we can relish both, we envy neither!

The CENTRE ROOM commences with a *Girl at a Window*, by Rembrandt [206]. The picture is known by the print of it, and is one of the most remarkable and pleasing in the Collection. For clearness, for breadth, for a lively, ruddy look of healthy nature, it cannot be surpassed. The execution of the drapery is masterly. There is a story told of its being his servant-maid looking out of a window, but it is evidently the portrait of a mere child.

A *Farrier Shooing an Ass*, by Berghem [232], is in his usual manner. There is truth of character and delicate finishing: but the fault of all Berghem's pictures is that he continues to finish after he has done looking at nature, and his last touches are different from hers. Hence comes that resemblance to *tea-board* painting, which even his best works are chargeable with.

We find here one or two small Claudes of no great value; and two very clever specimens of the court-painter,

Watteau, the Gainsborough of France. They are marked 197 and 210, *Fête Champêtre*, and *Le Bal Champêtre*.

There is something exceedingly light, agreeable, and characteristic in this artist's productions. He might also be said to breathe his figures and his flowers on the canvas—so fragile is their texture, so evanescent is his touch. He unites the court and the country at a sort of salient point—you may fancy yourself with Count Grammont and the beauties of Charles II. in their gay retreat at Tunbridge Wells. His trees have a drawing-room air with them, an appearance of gentility and etiquette, and nod gracefully overhead; while the figures below, thin as air, and *vegetably* clad, in the midst of all their affectation and grimace, seem to have just sprung out of the ground, or to be the fairy inhabitants of the scene in masquerade. They are the Oreads and Dryads of the Luxembourg! Quaint association, happily effected by the pencil of Watteau! In the *Bal Champêtre* we see Louis XIV. himself dancing, looking so like an old beau, his face flushed and puckered up with gay anxiety; but then the satin of his slashed doublet is made of the softest leaves of the water-lily; Zephyr plays wanton with the curls of his wig! We have nobody who could produce a companion to this picture now: nor do we very devoutly wish it. The Louis the Fourteenth is extinct, and we suspect their revival would hardly be compensated even by the re appearance of a Watteau.

No. 254, *The Death of Cardinal Beaufort*, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, is a very indifferent and rather unpleasant sketch of a very fine picture. One of the most delightful things in this delightful collection is the *Portrait of the Prince of the Asturias* [194], by Velasquez. The easy lightness of the childish Prince contrasts delightfully with the unwieldy figure of the horse, which has evidently been brought all the way from the Low Countries for the amusement of his rider. Velasquez was (with only two exceptions,

Titian and Vandyck) as fine a portrait painter as ever lived!

In the centre room also is the *Meeting of Jacob and Rachel*, by Murillo [294], a sweet picture, with a fresh green landscape, and the heart of love in the midst of it.

There are several heads of Holbein scattered up and down the different compartments. We need hardly observe that they all have character in the extreme, so that we may be said to be acquainted with the people they represent: but then they give nothing but character, and only one part of that, *viz.*, the dry, the literal, the concrete, and fixed. They want the addition of passion and beauty; but they are the finest *caput mortuums* of expression that ever were made. Hans Holbein had none of the volatile essence of genius in his composition. If portrait-painting is the prose of the art, his pictures are the prose of portrait-painting. Yet he is a "reverend name" in art, and one of the benefactors of the human mind. He has left faces behind him that we would give the world to have seen, and there they are—stamped on his canvas for ever! Who, in reading over the names of certain individuals, does not feel a yearning in his breast to know their features and their lineaments? We look through a small frame, and lo! at the distance of three centuries, we have before us the figures of Anne Boleyn, of the virtuous Cranmer, the bigoted Queen Mary, the noble Surrey—as if we had seen them in their life-time, not perhaps in their best moods or happiest attitudes, but as they sometimes appeared, no doubt. We know at least what sort of looking people they were: our minds are made easy on that score; the "body and limbs" are there, and we may "add what flourishes" of grace or ornament we please. Holbein's heads are to the finest portraits what state papers are to history.

The first picture in the FOURTH ROOM is *The Prophet Samuel*, by Sir Joshua [286]. It is not the Prophet Samuel, but a very charming picture of a little child saying

its prayers. The second is *The Education of Bacchus*, by Nicholas Poussin [115].* This picture makes one thirsty to look at it—the colouring even is dry and adust. It is true *history* in the technical phrase, that is to say, true poetry in the vulgate. The figure of the infant Bacchus seems as if he would drink up a vintage—he drinks with his mouth, his hands, his belly, and his whole body. Gargantua was nothing to him. In the *Nursing of Jupiter* [300], in like manner, we are thrown back into the infancy of mythologic lore. The little Jupiter, suckled by a she-goat, is beautifully conceived and expressed; and the dignity and ascendancy given to these animals in the picture is wonderfully happy. They have a very imposing air of gravity indeed, and seem to be by prescription “grand caterers and wet-nurses of the state” of Heaven! *Apollo giving a poet a Cup of Water to drink*, by N. Poussin [295], is elegant and classical: and *The Flight into Egypt*, by N. Poussin [310], instantly takes the tone of Scripture history. This is strange, but so it is. All things are possible to a high imagination. All things, about which we have a feeling, may be expressed by true genius. A dark landscape, by the same hand [279], in a corner of the room, is a proof of this. There are trees in the foreground, with a paved road and buildings in the distance. The genius of antiquity might wander here, and feel itself at home. The large leaves are wet and heavy with dew, and the eye dwells “under the shade of melancholy boughs.” In the old collection (in Mr Desenfan’s time) the Poussins occupied a separate room by themselves, and it was (we confess) a very favourite room with us.

No. 159 is a *Landscape*, by Salvator Rosa. It is one of his very best—rough, grotesque, wild; Pan has struck it with his hoof; the trees, the rocks, the foreground, are

* The picture in the Dulwich Gallery is only a copy from the fine original in the National Gallery, No. 39.

of a piece, and the figures are subordinate to the landscape. The same dull sky lowers upon the scene, and the bleak air chills the crisp surface of the water. It is a consolation to us to meet with a fine Salvator. His is one of the great names in art, and it is among our sources of regret that we cannot always admire his works as we would do, from our respect to his reputation and our love of the man. Poor Salvator! he was unhappy in his life-time; and it vexes us to think that we cannot make him amends by fancying him so great a painter as some others, whose fame was not their only inheritance!

No. 281, *Venus and Cupid* is a delightful copy after Correggio. We have no such regrets or qualms of conscience with respect to him. "He has had his reward." The weight of his renown balances the weight of barbarous coin that sunk him to the earth. Could he live now, and know what others think of him, his misfortunes would seem as dross compared with his lasting glory, and his heart would melt within him at the thought, with a sweetness that only his own pencil could express.

No. 326, *The Virgin, Infant Christ, and St John*, by Andrea del Sarto, is exceedingly good.—No. 327, Another *Holy Family*, by the same, is an admirable picture, and only inferior to Raffaello. It has delicacy, force, thought, and feeling. "What lacks it then," to be equal to Raffaello? We hardly know, unless it be a certain firmness and freedom, and glowing animation. The execution is more timid and laboured. It looks like a picture (an exquisite one, indeed), but Raffaello's look like the divine reality itself!

No. 319, *Cocles defending the Bridge*, is by Le Brun. We do not like this picture, nor No. 252, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, by the same artist. One reason is that they are French, and another that they are not good. They have great merit, it is true, but their merits are only splendid sins. They are mechanical, mannered, colourless, and unfeeling.

No. 248, is Murillo's *Spanish Girl with Flowers*. The sun tinted the young gipsy's complexion, and not the painter.—No. 215, is *The Casatella and Villa of Mæcenæ, near Tivoli*, by Wilson, with his own portrait in the foreground. It is an imperfect sketch; but there is a curious anecdote relating to it, that he was so delighted with the waterfall itself that he cried out, while painting it: "Well done, water, by G-d!"—No. 324, *Saint Cecilia*, by Guercino, is a very pleasing picture, in his least gaudy manner.—No. 263, *Venus and Adonis*, by Titian. We see so many of these Venuses and Adonises that we should like to know which is the true one. This is one of the best we have seen. We have two Francesco Molas in this room, the *Rape of Proserpine* [No. 285], and a *Landscape with a Holy Family* [No. 266]. This artist dipped his pencil so thoroughly in Titian's palette that his works cannot fail to have that rich, mellow look, which is always delightful.—No. 309, *Portrait of Philip the Fourth of Spain*, by Velasquez, is purity and truth itself. We used to like the *Sleeping Nymph*, by Titian, when we saw it formerly in the little entrance-room at Desenhans', but we cannot say much in its praise here.*

THE FIFTH ROOM is the smallest, but the most precious in its contents.—No. 283, *Spanish Beggar Boys*, by Murillo, is the triumph of this collection, and almost of painting. In the imitation of common life, nothing ever went beyond it, or, as far as we can judge, came up to it. A Dutch picture is mechanical, and mere *still life* to it. But this is life itself. The boy at play on the ground is miraculous. It is done with a few dragging strokes of the pencil, and with a little tinge of colour; but the mouth, the nose, the eyes, the chin, are as brimful as they can hold of expression, of arch roguery, of animal spirits, of vigorous, elastic health. The vivid, glowing, cheerful look is such as could only be

* The editor is not aware of any such picture by Titian in the Dulwich Gallery at present.

found beneath a southern sun. The fens and dykes of Holland (with all our respect for them) could never produce such an epitome of the vital principle. The other boy, standing up with the pitcher in his hand, and a crust of bread in his mouth, is scarcely less excellent. His sulky, phlegmatic indifference speaks for itself. The companion to this picture, 284, is also very fine. Compared with these imitations of nature, as faultless as they are spirited, Murillo's Virgins and Angels, however good in themselves, look vapid and even vulgar. A *Child Sleeping* [330], by the same painter, is a beautiful and masterly study. No. 128, a *Musical Party*, by Giorgione, is well worthy the notice of the connoisseur.—No. 331, *St John Preaching in the Wilderness*, by Guido, is an extraordinary picture, and very unlike this painter's usual manner. The colour is as if the flesh had been stained all over with brick-dust. There is, however, a wildness about it which accords well with the subject, and the figure of St John is full of grace and gusto.—No. 339, *The Martyrdom of St Sebastian*, by the same, is much finer, both as to execution and expression. The face is imbued with deep passion.—No. 133, *Portrait of a Man*, by L. da Vinci, is truly simple and grand, and at once carries you back to that age.—*Boors Merry Making*, by A. Ostade [190], is fine ; but has no business where it is. Yet it takes up very little room.—No. 340, *Portrait of Mrs Siddons, in the character of the Tragic Muse*, by Sir Joshua, appears to us to resemble neither Mrs Siddons nor the Tragic Muse. It is in a bastard style of art. Sir Joshua had an importunate theory of improving upon nature. He might improve upon indifferent nature, but when he had got the finest, he thought to improve upon that too, and only spoiled it.—No. 255, *The Virgin and Child*, by Correggio, can only be a copy.*—No. 191, *The Judgment of Paris*, by Vanderwerff, is a picture, and by a

* It is a copy from Correggio's *Vierge au Panier*, in the National Gallery, No. 23.

master that we hate. He always chooses for his subjects naked figures of women, and tantalises us by making them of coloured ivory. They are like hardware toys.—No. 333, *A Cardinal blessing a Person*, by P. Veronese, is dignified and picturesque in the highest degree.—No. 349, *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, by Annibal Caracci, is an elaborate, but not very successful performance.—No. 329, *Christ bearing His Cross*, by Morales, concludes the list, and is worthy to conclude it.

THE MARQUIS OF STAFFORD'S GALLERY.

OUR intercourse with the dead is better than our intercourse with the living. There are only three pleasures in life pure and lasting, and all derived from inanimate things—books, pictures, and the face of nature. What is the world but a heap of ruined friendships, but the grave of love? All other pleasures are as false and hollow, vanishing from our embrace like smoke, or like a feverish dream. Scarcely can we recollect that they were, or recall without an effort the anxious and momentary interest we took in them.

But thou, oh! divine *Bath of Diana*, with deep azure dyes, with roseate hues, spread by the hand of Titian, art still there upon the wall, another, yet the same that thou wert five-and-twenty years ago, nor wantest

— “ Forked mountain or blue promontory,
With trees upon 't that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air!”

And lo! over the clear lone brow of Tudorley and Norman Court, knit into the web and fibres of our heart, the sighing grove waves in the autumnal air, deserted by Love, by Hope, but for ever haunted by Memory! And there that fine passage stands in Antony and Cleopatra as we read it long ago with exulting eyes in Paris, after puzzling over a tragedy of Racine's, and cried aloud: “Our Shakespeare was also a poet!” These feelings are dear to us at the time; and they come back unimpaired, heightened, mellowed, whenever we choose to go back to them. We turn over the leaf and “volume of the brain,”

and there see them face to face.—Marina in Pericles complains that

“Life is as a storm hurrying her from her friends!”

Not so from the friends above-mentioned. If we bring but an eye, an understanding, and a heart to them, we find them always with us, always the same. The change, if there is one, is in us, not in them. Oh! thou then, whoever thou art, that dost seek happiness in thyself, independent of others, not subject to caprice, not mocked by insult, not snatched away by ruthless hands, over which Time has no power, and that Death alone cancels, seek it (if thou art wise) in books, in pictures, and the face of nature, for these alone we may count upon as friends for life! While we are true to ourselves, they will not be faithless to us. While we remember anything, we cannot forget them. As long as we have a wish for pleasure, we may find it here; for it depends only on our love for them, and not on theirs for us. The enjoyment is purely *ideal*, and is refined, unembittered, unfading, for that reason.

A complaint has been made of the short lived duration of works of art, and particularly of pictures; and poets more especially are apt to lament and to indulge in elegiac strains over the fragile beauties of the sister-art. The complaint is inconsiderate, if not invidious. *They will last our time.* Nay, they have lasted centuries before us, and will last centuries after us; and even when they are no more, will leave a shadow and a cloud of glory behind them, through all time. Bacon exclaims triumphantly, “Have not the poems of Homer lasted five-and-twenty hundred years, and not a syllable of them is lost?” But it might be asked in return,—Have not many of the Greek statues now lasted almost as long, without losing a particle of their splendour or their meaning, while the Iliad (except to a very few) has become almost a dead

letter? Has not the Venus de Medici had almost as many partisans and admirers as the Helen of the old blind bard? Besides, what has Phidias gained in reputation even by the discovery of the Elgin Marbles? Or is not Michael Angelo's the greatest name in modern art, whose works we only know from description and by report? Surely, there is something in a name, in wide-spread reputation, in endless renown, to satisfy the ambition of the mind of man. Who in his works would vie immortality with nature? An epitaph, an everlasting monument in the dim remembrance of ages, is enough below the skies. Moreover, the sense of final inevitable decay *humanises*, and gives an affecting character to the triumphs of exalted art. Imperishable works executed by perishable hands are a sort of insult to our nature, and almost a contradiction in terms. They are ungrateful children, and mock the makers. Neither is the noble idea of antiquity legibly made out without the marks of the progress and lapse of time. That which is as good now as ever it was seems a thing of yesterday. Nothing is old to the imagination that does not appear to grow old. Ruins are grander and more venerable than any modern structure can be, or than the oldest could be, if kept in the most entire preservation. They convey the perspective of time. So the Elgin Marbles are more impressive from their mouldering, imperfect state. They transport us to the Parthenon and old Greece. The Theseus is of the age of Theseus: while the Apollo Belvedere is a modern fine gentleman; and we think of this last figure only as an ornament to the room where it happens to be placed.—We conceive that those are persons of narrow minds who cannot relish an author's style that smacks of time, that has a crust of antiquity over it, like that which gathers upon old wine. These sprinklings of *archaisms* and obsolete turns of expression (so abhorrent to the fashionable reader) are intellectual links that connect the genera-

tions together, and enlarge our knowledge of language and of nature. Of the two, we prefer *black-letter* to hot-pressed paper! Does not every language change and wear out? Do not the most popular writers become quaint and old-fashioned every fifty or every hundred years? Is there not a constant conflict of taste and opinion between those who adhere to the established and triter modes of expression, and those who affect glossy innovations in advance of the age? It is pride enough for the best authors *to have been read*. This applies to their own country; and to all others, they are "a book sealed." But Rubens is as good in Holland as he is in Flanders where he was born, in Italy or in Spain, in England or in Scotland—no, there alone he is *not* understood. The Scotch understand nothing but what is Scotch. What has the dry, husky, economic eye of Scotland to do with the florid hues and luxuriant extravagance of Rubens? Nothing. They like Wilkie's *petit* style better.

It may be said that translations remedy the want of universality of language: but prints give (at least) as good an idea of pictures as translations do of poems, or of any productions of the press that employ the colouring of style and imagination. *Gil Blas* is translatable: Racine and Rousseau are not. The mere English student knows more of the character and spirit of Raffaele's pictures in the Vatican from a print, than he does of Ariosto or Tasso from Hoole's version. There is, however, one exception to the catholic language of painting, which is in French pictures. They are national fixtures, and ought never to be removed from the soil in which they grow. They will not answer anywhere else, nor are they worth Custom-house duties. Flemish, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, are all good and intelligible in their several ways—we know what they mean—they require no interpreter: but the French painters see nature with organs and with minds peculiarly

their own. One must be born in France to understand their painting or their poetry. Their productions in art are either literal or extravagant—dry, frigid *fac-similes*, in which they seem to take up nature by pin-points, or else vapid distorted caricatures, out of all rule and compass. They are, in fact, at home only in the light and elegant; and whenever they attempt to add force or solidity (as they must do in the severer productions of the pencil) they are compelled to substitute an excess of minute industry for a comprehension of the whole, or make a desperate mechanical effort at extreme expression, instead of giving the true, natural, and powerful workings of passion. Their representations of nature are meagre skeletons, that bear the same relation to the originals that botanical specimens, enclosed in a portfolio, flat, dry, hard, and pithless, do to flourishing plants and shrubs. Their historical figures are painful outlines or graduated elevations of the common statues, spiritless, colourless, motionless, which have the form, but none of the power of the *antique*. What an abortive attempt is the *Coronation of Napoleon*, by the celebrated David, lately exhibited in this country! It looks like a finished sign-post painting—a sea of frozen outlines. Could the artist make nothing of “the foremost man in all this world,” but a stiff, upright figure? The figure and attitude of the Empress are, however, pretty and graceful; and we recollect one face in profile, of an ecclesiastic, to the right, with a sanguine look of health in the complexion, and a large benevolence of soul. It is not Monsieur Talleyrand, whom the late Lord Castlereagh characterised as a worthy man and his friend. His lordship was not a physiognomist! The whole of the shadowed part of the picture seems to be enveloped in a shower of blue powder. But to make amends for all that there is or that there is not in the work, David has introduced his wife and his two daughters, and in the Catalogue has given us the places of abode and the names of

the husbands of the latter. This is a little out of place, yet these are the people who laugh at our blunders. We do not mean to extend the above sweeping censure to Claude or Poussin: of course they are excepted: but even in them the national character lurked amidst unrivalled excellence. If Claude has a fault, it is that he is finical; and Poussin's figures might be said by a satirist to be antique puppets. To proceed to our task.—

The first picture that struck us on entering the Marquis of Stafford's Gallery (a little bewildered as we were with old recollections and present objects) was the *Meeting of Christ and St John*, one of Raffaele's master-pieces. The eager "child-worship" of the young St John, the modest retirement and dignified sweetness of the Christ, and the graceful, matron-like air of the Virgin bending over them, full and noble, yet feminine and elegant, cannot be surpassed. No words can describe them to those who have not seen the picture:—the attempt is still vainer to those who have. There is, however, a very fine engraving of this picture, which may be had for a trifling sum.—No glory is around the head of the Mother, nor is it needed: but the soul of the painter sheds its influence over it like a dove, and the spirit of love, sanctity, beauty, breathes from the divine group. There are four Raffaelles (Holy Families) in this collection, two others by the side of this in his early more precise and affected manner, somewhat faded, and a small one of the *Virgin, Sleeping Jesus, and St John*, in his finest manner. There is, or there was, a duplicate of this picture (of which the engraving is also common) in the Louvre, which was certainly superior to the one at the Marquis of Stafford's. The colouring of the drapery in that too was cold, and the face of the Virgin thin and poor; but never was infancy laid asleep more calmly, more sweetly, more soundly, than in the figure of our Saviour—the little pouting mouth seemed to drink balmy, innocent sleep—and the rude expression of wonder and delight in

the more robust, sun-burnt, fur-clad figure of St John was as spirited in itself as it was striking, when contrasted with the meeker beauties of the figure opposed to it. From these we turn to the *FOUR AGES*, by Titian, or Giorgione, as some say. Strange that there should have lived two men in the same age, on the same spot of earth, with respect to whom it should bear a question—which of them painted such a picture! Barry, we remember, and Collins, the miniature-painter, thought it a Giorgione, and they were considered two of the best judges *going*, at the time this picture was exhibited, among others, in the Orleans Gallery. We cannot pretend to decide on such nice matters *ex cathedrâ*; but no painter need be ashamed to own it. The gradations of human life are marked with characteristic felicity, and the landscape, which is thrown in, adds a pastoral charm and *naïveté* to the whole. To live or to die in such a chosen still retreat, must be happiness! Certainly, this composition suggests a beautiful moral lesson; and as to the painting of the group of children in the corner, we suppose, for careless freedom of pencil and a certain milky softness of the flesh, it can scarcely be paralleled. Over the three Raffaelles is a *Danae*, by Annibal Caracci, which we used to adore where it was hung on high in the Orleans Gallery. The face is fine, up-turned, expectant; and the figure no less fine, desirable, ample, worthy of a God. The golden shower is just seen descending; the landscape at a distance has (so fancy might interpret) a cold shuddering aspect. There is another very fine picture of the same hand close by, *St Gregory with Angels*. It is difficult to know which to admire most, the resigned and yet earnest expression of the saint, or the elegant forms, the graceful attitudes, and bland, cordial, benignant faces of the attendant angels. The artist in these last has evidently had an eye to Correggio, both in the waving outline and in the charm of the expression; and he has succeeded admirably, but not entirely. Something

of the extreme unction of Correggio is wanting. The drawing of Annibal's Angels is, perhaps, too firm, too sinewy, too masculine. In Correggio, the Angel's spirit seemed to be united to a human body, to imbue, mould, penetrate every part with its sweetness and softness: in Caracci, you would say that a heavenly spirit inhabited, looked out of, moved a goodly human frame,

"And o'er informed the tenement of clay."

The composition of this picture is rather forced (it was one of those *made to order* for the monks) and the colour is somewhat metallic; but it has, notwithstanding, on the whole, a striking and tolerably harmonious effect.—There is still another picture by Caracci (also an old favourite with us, for it was in the Orleans set) *Diana and Nymphs bathing*, with the story of Calisto. It is one of his very best, with something of the drawing of the antique and the landscape-colouring of Titian. The figures are all heroic, handsome, such as might belong to huntresses, or goddesses: and the coolness and seclusion of the scene, under grey overhanging cliffs, and brown overshadowing trees, with all the richness and truth of nature, have the effect of an enchanting reality. The story and figures are more classical and better managed than those of the *Diana and Calisto* by Titian; but there is a charm in that picture and the fellow to it, the *Diana and Actæon* (there is no other fellow to it in the world!), which no words can convey. It is the charm thrown over each by the greatest genius for colouring that the world ever saw. It is difficult, nay impossible, to say which is the finest in this respect: but either one or the other (whichever we turn to, and we can never be satisfied with looking at either—so rich a scene do they unfold, so serene a harmony do they infuse into the soul) is like a divine piece of music, or rises "like an exhalation of rich distilled perfumes." In the figures, in the landscape, in the water, in the sky, there are tones, colours, scattered with

a profuse and unerring hand, gorgeous, but most true, dazzling with their force, but blended, softened, woven together into a woof like that of Iris—tints of flesh colour, as if you saw the blood circling beneath the pearly skin ; clouds empurpled with setting suns : hills steeped in azure skies ; trees turning to a mellow brown ; the cold grey rocks, and the water so translucent that you see the shadows and the snowy feet of the naked nymphs in it. With all this prodigality of genius, there is the greatest severity and discipline of art. The figures seem grouped for the effect of colour—the most striking contrasts are struck out, and then a third object, a piece of drapery, an uplifted arm, a bow and arrows, a straggling weed, is introduced to make an intermediate tint, or carry on the harmony. Every colour is melted, *impasted* into every other, with fine keeping and bold diversity. Look at that indignant, queen-like figure of Diana (more perhaps like an offended mortal princess than an immortal goddess, though the immortals could frown and give themselves strange airs), and see the snowy, ermine like skin ; the pale clear shadows of the delicately-formed back ; then the brown colour of the slender trees behind to set off the shaded flesh ; and last, the dark figure of the Ethiopian girl behind, completing the gradation. Then the bright scarf suspended in the air connects itself with the glowing clouds, and deepens the solemn azure of the sky ; Actæon's bow and arrows fallen on the ground are also red ; and there is a little flower on the brink of the bath which catches and pleases the eye, saturated with this colour. The yellowish grey of the earth purifies the low tone of the figures where they are in half-shadow ; and this again is enlivened by the leaden-coloured fountain of the bath, which is set off (or kept down in its proper place) by the blue vestments strewn near it. The figure of Actæon is spirited and natural ; it is that of a bold rough hunter in the early ages, struck with surprise, abashed with beauty. The forms of some of the

female figures are elegant enough, particularly that of Diana in the story of Calisto; and there is a very pretty-faced girl mischievously dragging the culprit forward; but it is the texture of the flesh that is thoroughly delicious, unrivalled, surpassingly fair. The landscape canopies the living scene with a sort of proud, disdainful consciousness. The trees nod to it, and the hills roll at a distance in a sea of colour. Everywhere tone, not form, predominates—there is not a distinct line in the picture—but a gusto, a rich taste of colour is left upon the eye, as if it were the palate, and the diapason of picturesque harmony is full to overflowing. “O Titian and Nature! which of you copied the other!”

We are ashamed of this description, now that we have made it, and heartily wish somebody would make a better. There is another Titian here (which was also in the Orleans Gallery),* *Venus rising from the Sea*. The figure and face are gracefully designed and sweetly expressed:—whether it is the picture of the Goddess of Love may admit of a question: that it is the picture of a lovely woman, in a lovely attitude, admits of none. The half-shadow, in which most of it is painted, is a kind of veil through which the delicate skin shows more transparent and aerial. There is nothing in the picture but this single exquisitely-turned figure, and if it were continued downward to a whole length, it would seem like a copy of a statue of the goddess carved in ivory or marble; but being only a half-length, it has not this effect at all, but looks like an enchanting study, or a part of a larger composition, selected *a parti*. The hair, and the arm holding it up, are nearly the same as in the well-known picture of *Titian's Mistress*, and as delicious. The background is

* Two-thirds of the principal pictures in the Orleans Collection are at present at Stafford House, one third purchased by the Marquis of Stafford, and another third left by the Duke of Bridgewater, another of the purchasers. Mr Brian had the remaining third.

beautifully painted. We said before that there was no object in the picture detached from the principal figure. Nay, there is the sea, and a sea-shell, but these might be given in sculpture.

Under the *Venus* is a portrait, by Vandyck, of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, a most gentleman-like performance, mild, clear, intelligent, unassuming; and on the right of the spectator, a *Madonna*, by Guido, with the icy glow of sanctity upon it; and to the left, the *Fable of Salmacis* by Albano (saving the ambiguity of the subject), exquisitely painted. Four finer specimens of the art can scarcely be found again in so small a compass. There is in another room a portrait, said to be by Moroni, called 'TITIAN'S SCHOOLMASTER, from a vague tradition that he was in the habit of frequently visiting it, in order to study and learn from it. If so, he must have profited by his assiduity; for it looks as if he had painted it. Not knowing anything of Moroni, if we had been asked who had done it, we should have replied, "*Either Titian or the Devil.*"* It is considerably more laboured and minute than Titian; but the only objection at all staggering is that it has less fiery animation than is ordinarily to be found in his pictures. Look at the portrait above it, for instance—Clement VII. by the great Venetian; and you find the eye looking at you again, as if it had been observing you all the time: but the eye in *Titian's Schoolmaster*, is an eye to look at, not to look with,† or if it looks at you, it does not look through you, which may almost be made a test of Titian's heads. There is not the spirit, the intelligence within, moulding the expression, and giving it intensity of purpose and decision of character. In every other respect but this (and perhaps a certain want of breadth) it is as good as Titian. There is (we

* "Aut Erasmus aut Diabolus." Sir Thomas More's exclamation on meeting with the philosopher of Rotterdam.

† Curran described John Kemble's eye in these words.

understand) a half-length of Clement VII. by Julio Romano, in the Papal Palace at Rome, in which he is represented as seated above the spectator, with the head elevated and the eye looking down like a camel's with an amazing dignity of aspect. The picture (Mr Northcote says) is hard and ill-coloured, but, in strength of character and conception, superior to the Titian at the Marquis of Stafford's. Titian, undoubtedly, put a good deal of his own character into his portraits. He was not himself filled with the "milk of human kindness." He got his brother, who promised to rival him in his own art, and of whom he was jealous, sent on a foreign embassy; and he so frightened Pordenone, while he was painting an altarpiece for a church, that he worked with his palette and brushes in his hand, and a drawn sword by his side.

We meet with one or two admirable portraits, particularly No. 112, by Tintoretto, which is of a fine fleshy tone, and *A Doge of Venice*, by Palma Vecchio, stamped with an expressive look of official and assumed dignity. There is a *Bassano*, No. 95, *The Circumcision*, the colours of which are somewhat dingy with age, and sunk into the canvas; but as the sun shone upon it while we were looking at it, it glittered all green and gold. *Bassano's* execution is as fine as possible, and his colouring has a most striking harmonious effect.

We must not forget the *Mulders*, supposed to be by Correggio, in which the figure of the male seems actually passing across the picture (you hear his bells); nor the little copy of his *Marriage of St Catherine*, by L. Caracci, which is all over grace, delicacy, and sweetness. Any one may judge of his progress in that taste for the refinements of art, by his liking for this picture. Indeed, Correggio is the very essence of refinement. Among other pictures in the Italian division of the gallery, we would point out the *Claudes* (particularly Nos. 43 and 50) which, though inferior to Mr Angerstein's as compositions, preserve more of

the delicacy of execution (or what Barry used to call "*the fine oleaginous touches of Claude*")—two small Gaspar Poussins, in which the landscape seems to have been just washed by a shower, and the storm blown over.

The *Death of Adonis*, by Luca Cambiasi, an Orleans picture, lovely in sorrow and in speechless agony, and faded like the life that is just expiring in it. A *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*, by Alessandro Veronese, a very clever and sensible, but rigidly painted picture*: an Albert Durer, the *Death of the Virgin: a Female Head*, by Leonardo da Vinci, and the *Woman taken in Adultery*, by Pordenone, which last the reader may admire or not, as he pleases. We cannot close this list without referring to the *Christ bearing His cross*, by Domenichino, a picture full of interest and skill; and the little touching allegory of the *Infant Christ sleeping on a Cross*, by Guido.

The Dutch division contains a number of excellent specimens of the best masters. There are two Tenierses: a *Fair*, and *Boors merry-making*, unrivalled for a look of the open air, for lively awkward gesture, and variety and grotesqueness of grouping and rustic character. There is a little picture, by Le Nain, called the *Village Minstrel*, with a set of youthful auditors, the most incorrigible little mischievous urchins we ever saw, but with admirable execution and expression. The Metzus are curious and fine, the Ostades admirable. Gerard Douw's own portrait is certainly a gem. We noticed a Ruysdael in one corner of the room [No. 221], a dark, flat, wooded country, but delectable in tone and pencilling. Vandevelde's Sea-pieces are capital—the water is smooth as glass, and the boats and vessels have the buoyancy of butterflies on it. The *Sea-port*, by A. Cuyp, is miraculous for truth, brilliancy, and clearness, almost beyond actual water. These cannot be passed over; but there is a little picture which we beg to commend to the gentle reader, the Vangoyen, at the end of

* It is said in the Catalogue to be painted on touchstone.

the room, No. 156, which has that yellow-tawny colour in the meads, and that grey chill look in the old convent, that give one the precise feeling of a mild day towards the end of winter, in a humid, marshy country. We many years ago copied a Vangoyen, a view of a Canal "with yellow tufted banks and gliding sail," modestly pencilled, truly felt—and have had an affection for him ever since. There is a small inner room with some most respectable modern pictures. Wilkie's *Breakfast-table* is among them.

The Sacraments, by N. Poussin, occupy a separate room by themselves, and have a grand and solemn effect ; but we could hardly see them where they are ; and in general we prefer his treatment of light and classical subjects to those of sacred history. He wanted *wright* for the last ; or, if that word is objected to, we will change it, and say *force*.

On the whole, the Stafford Gallery is probably the most magnificent Collection this country can boast. The specimens of the different schools are as numerous as they are select ; and they are equally calculated to delight the student by the degree, or to inform the uninitiated by the variety of excellence. Yet even this Collection is not complete. It is deficient in Rembrandts, Vandycks, and Rubenses—except one splendid allegory and fruit piece by the last.

THE PICTURES AT WINDSOR CASTLE.

THE palaces of Windsor and Hampton Court contain pictures worthy of the feelings we attach to the names of those places. The first boasts a number of individual pictures of great excellence and interest, and the last the Cartoons.

Windsor Castle is remarkable in many respects. Its tall, grey, square towers, seated on a striking eminence, overlook for many miles the subjacent country, and, eyed in the distance, lead the mind of the solitary traveller to romantic musing; or, approached nearer, give the heart a quicker and stronger pulsation. Windsor, besides its picturesque, commanding situation, and its being the only palace in the kingdom fit for the receptacle of "a line of kings," is the scene of many classical associations. Who can pass through Datchet and the neighbouring greensward paths, and not think of Falstaff, of Anne Page, and the oak of Herne the hunter? Or, if he does not, still he is affected by them as if he did. The tall slim deer glance startled by, in some neglected track of memory, and fairies trip it in the unconscious haunts of the imagination! Pope's lines on Windsor Forest also suggest themselves to the mind in the same way, and make the air about it delicate. Gray has consecrated the same spot by his *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*; and the finest passage in Burke's writings is his comparison of the British Monarch to "the proud Keep of Windsor." The walls and massy towers of Windsor Castle are indeed built of solid stone, weather-beaten, time-proof; but the image answering to them in the mind's eye is woven of pure thought and the airy films of the imagination—Arachne's web not finer!

The rooms are chill and comfortless at this time of the year,* and gilded ceilings look down on smoky fire-places. The view from the windows, too, which is so rich and glowing in the summer-time, is desolate and deformed with the rains overflowing the marshy grounds. As to physical comfort, one seems to have no more of it in these tapestried halls and on marble floors, than the poor bird driven before the pelting storm, or the ploughboy seeking shelter from the drizzling sky, in his sheepskin jacket and clouted shoes, beneath the dripping, leafless spray. The palace does not (more than the hovel) always defend us against the winter's cold. The apartments are so filled with too many rubbishy pictures of kings and queens—there are too many of Verrio's paintings and a whole roomful of West's; but there are ten or twenty pictures which the eye, having once seen, never loses sight of, and that make Windsor one of the retreats and treasuries of art in this country. These, however, are chiefly pictures which have a personal and individual interest attached to them, as we have already hinted: there are very few historical compositions of any value, and the subjects of the others are so desultory that the young person who shows them, and goes through the names of the painters and portraits very correctly, could she very nearly went out of her mind in the three weeks she was "studying her part." It is a matter of nomenclature: we hope we shall make as few blunders in our report as she did.

In the first room the stranger is shown into, there are two large landscapes by Zuccarelli [26 and 27]. They are clever, well painted pictures; but they are worth nothing. The fault of this artist is, that there is nothing absolutely good or bad in his pictures. They are mere handicraft. The whole is done with a certain mechanical ease and indifference; but it is evident no part of the picture gave him any pleasure, and it is impossible it should give the spectator any. His only ambition was to execute his task

* The present criticism was written in February 1833.

so as to save his credit ; and your first impulse is to turn away from the picture, and save your time.

In the next room, there are four Vandycks—two of them excellent. One is the Duchess of Richmond [3], a whole-length, in a white satin drapery, with a pet lamb. The expression of her face is a little sullen and capricious. The other, the Countess of Carlisle [14], has a shrewd, clever, sensible countenance ; and, in a certain archness of look, and the contour of the lower part of the face, resembles the late Mrs Jordan. Between these two portraits is a copy after Rembrandt, by Gainsborough, a fine *sombre*, mellow head, with the hat flapped over the face.*

Among the most delightful and interesting of the pictures in this Collection, is the portrait by Vandyck of Lady Venetia Digby [6]. It is an allegorical composition : but what truth, what purity, what delicacy in the execution ! You are introduced into the presence of a beautiful woman of quality of a former age, and it would be next to impossible to perform an unbecoming action with that portrait hanging in the room. It has an air of nobility about it, a spirit of humanity within it. There is a dove-like innocence and softness about the eyes ; in the clear delicate complexion, health and sorrow contend for the mastery ; the mouth is sweetness itself, the nose highly intelligent, and the forehead is one of "clear-spirited thought." But misfortune has touched all this grace and beauty, and left its canker there. This is shown no less by the air that pervades it than by the accompanying emblems. The children in particular are exquisitely painted, and have an evident reference to those we lately noticed in the *Four Ages* by Titian. This portrait, both from the style and subject, reminds one forcibly of Mrs Hutchinson's admirable Memoirs of her own Life. Both are equally history, and the history of the female

* The only male portrait, by Rembrandt, in Windsor Castle is of a *Young Man in a Turban*. There is a copy, by Gainsborough, from Rembrandt's portrait of a *Jewish Rabbi*, at Hampton Court, No. 541.

heart (depicted, in the one case by the pencil, in the other, by the pen) in the finest age of female accomplishment and pious devotion.

Look at this portrait, breathing the beauty of virtue, and compare it with the "Beauties" of Charles II.'s Court by Lely.* They look just like what they were—a set of kept-mistresses, painted, tawdry, showing off their theatrical or meretricious airs and graces, without one trace of real elegance or refinement, or one spark of sentiment to touch the heart. Lady Grammont is the handsomest of them [H. C. 163]; and, though the most voluptuous in her attire and attitude, the most decent. The Duchess of Cleveland [H. C. 160], in her helmet and plumes, looks quite like a heroine of romance or modern Amazon: but for an air of easy assurance, inviting admiration, and alarmed at nothing but being thought coy, commend us to my Lady Rochester above [H. C. 154], in the sky-blue drapery, thrown carelessly across her shoulders! As paintings, these celebrated portraits cannot rank very high. They have an affected ease, but a real hardness of manner and execution; and they have that contortion of attitude and setness of features which we afterwards find carried to so disgusting and insipid an excess in Kneller's portraits. Sir Peter Lely was, however, a better painter than Sir Godfrey Kneller—that is the highest praise that can be accorded to him. He had more spirit, more originality, and was the livelier coxcomb of the two! Both these painters possessed considerable mechanical dexterity, but it is not of a refined kind. Neither of them could be ranked among great painters, yet they were thought by their contemporaries and themselves superior to every one. At the distance of a hundred years we see the thing plainly enough.

In the same room with the portrait of Lady Digby there is one of Killigrew and Carew by the same masterly hand (4). There is spirit and character in the profile of

* At Hampton Court.

Carew, while the head of Killigrew is surprising from its composure and sedateness of aspect. He was one of the grave wits of the day, who made nonsense a profound study, and turned trifles into philosophy, and philosophy into a jest. The pale, sallow complexion of this head is throughout in wonderful keeping. The beard and face seem nearly of the same colour. We often see this clear uniform colour of the skin in Titian's portraits. But then the dark eyes, beard, and eyebrows give relief and distinctness. The fair hair and complexions that Vandyck usually painted, with the almost total absence of shade from his pictures, made the task more difficult; and, indeed, the prominence and effect he produces in this respect, without any of the usual means are almost miraculous.

There are several of his portraits, equestrian and others, of Charles I. in this Collection, some of them good, none of them first-rate. Those of Henrietta (his Queen) are always delightful. The painter has made her the most lady-like of queens, and of women.

The family picture of the Children of Charles I. (11) is certainly admirably painted and managed. The large mastiff dog is inimitably fine and true to nature, and seems as if he was made to be pulled about by a parcel of royal infants from generation to generation. In general, it may be objected to Vandyck's *dressed* children, that they look like little old men and women. His grown-up people had too much stiffness and formality; and the same thing must quite overlay the playfulness of infancy. Yet what a difference between these young princes of the house of Stuart, and two of the princes of the reigning family with their mother, by Ramsay, which are evident likenesses to this hour!

We have lost our reckoning as to the order of the pictures and rooms in which they are placed, and must proceed promiscuously through the remainder of our catalogue.*

* In the present edition the references are supplied within brackets.

One of the most noted pictures at Windsor is that of the *Misers** by Quintin Matsys [67]. Its name is greater than its merits, like many other pictures which have a lucky or intelligible subject, boldly executed. The conception is good, the colouring bad; the drawing firm, and the expression coarse and obvious. We are sorry to speak at all disparagingly of Quintin Matsys; for the story goes that he was originally bred a blacksmith, and turned painter to gain his master's daughter, who would give her hand to no one but on that condition. Happy he who thus gained the object of his love, though posterity may differ about his merits as an artist! Yet it is certain that any romantic incident of this kind, connected with a well-known work, inclines us to regard it with a favourable instead of a critical eye, by enhancing our pleasure in it; as the eccentric character, the wild subjects, and the sounding name of Salvator Rosa have tended to lift him into the highest rank of fame among painters.

In the same room with the *Misers* by the Blacksmith of Antwerp, is a very different picture by Titian, consisting of two figures also—viz., Himself and a Venetian Senator [54]. It is one of the finest specimens of this master. His own portrait is not much: it has spirit, but is hard, with somewhat of a vulgar, knowing look. But the head of the Senator† is as fine as anything that ever proceeded from the hand of man. The expression is a lambent flame, a soul of fire diamed, not quenched, by age. The flesh *is* flesh. If Rubens' pencil fed upon roses, Titian's was *carnivorous*. The tone is betwixt a gold and silver hue. The texture and pencilling are marrowy. The dress is a rich crimson, which seems to have been growing deeper ever since it was painted. It is a front view. As far as attitude or action is concerned, it is mere *still-life*; but the look is of that

* Or more properly the *Money-changers*. A miser when he counts his gold loves entire solitude.

† The Chancellor Andrea Franceschini.

kind that goes through you at a single glance. Let any one look well at this portrait, and if he then sees nothing in it, or in the portraits of this painter in general, let him give up *virtù* and criticism in despair.

This room is rich in valuable gems, which might serve as a test of a real taste for the art, depending for their value on intrinsic qualities, and not on imposing subjects, or mechanical arrangement or quantity. As where "the still small voice of reason" is wanting, we judge of actions by noisy success and popularity; so where there is no true moral sense in art, nothing goes down but pomp, and bustle, and pretension. The eye of taste looks to see if a work has nature's finest image and superscription upon it, and for no other title and passport to fame. There is a *Young Man's Head* (we believe in one corner of this room) by Holbein [114], in which we can read high and heroic thoughts and resolutions better than in any *Continence of Scipio* we ever saw, or than in all the *Battles of Alexander* thrown into a lump.* There is a *Portrait of Erasmus* [57] by the same, and in the same or an adjoining room, in which we see into the mind of a scholar and of an amiable man, as through a window. There is a *Head* by Parmegiano [60], lofty, triumphant, showing the spirit of another age and clime; one by Raffaele, studious and self-involved;† another, said to be by Leonardo da Vinci (but more like Holbein), grown crabbed with age and thought; and a girl reading, by Correggio, intent on her subject, and not forgetting herself.‡ These are the materials of history; and if it is not made of them, it is a nickname or a mockery. All that does not lay open the fine network of the heart and brain of man, that does not make

* The picture in question is only a copy from Holbein by George Pentz of Nuremberg.

† There is no Head by Raffaele at Windsor.

‡ There is no such subject by Correggio at Windsor. Hampton Court possesses a copy of his *St Catherine Reading*.

us see deeper into the soul, is but the apparatus and machinery of history-painting, and no more to it than the frame is to the picture.

We noticed a little *Mater Dolorosa* in one of the rooms [65] by Carlo Dolce, which is a pale, pleasing, expressive head. There are two large figures of his—a *Magdalen* [116], and another, the *Daughter of Herodias* [118]—which are in the very falsest style of colouring and expression; and *Youth and Age* by Denner,* which are in as perfectly bad a taste and style of execution as anything we ever saw of this artist, who was an adept in that way.

We are afraid we have forgotten one or two meritorious pictures which we meant to notice. There is one we just recollect, a *Portrait of a Youth* in black by Parmegiano [122]. It is in a singular style, but very bold, expressive, and natural. There is (in the same apartment of the palace) a fine picture of the *Battle of Nordlingen* by Rubens.† The size and spirit of the horses in the foreground, and the obvious animation of the riders, are finely contrasted with the airy perspective and mechanical grouping of the armies at a distance; and so as to prevent that confusion and want of positive relief which usually pervade battlepieces. In the same room (opposite) is Kneller's *Chinese Converted to Christianity*,‡ a portrait of which he was justly proud. It is a fine oil picture, clear, tawny, without trick or affectation, and full of character. One of Kneller's fine ladies or gentlemen, with their wigs and *toupées*, would have been mortally offended to have been so painted. The Chinese retains the same oily sly look after his conversion as before, and seems just as incapable of a change of religion as a piece of *terra cotta*.

* These are at Hampton Court. Nos. 328, 329.

† There is no such picture at present in the public apartments at Windsor.

‡ This picture used to hang at Kensington; but it is now in the private apartments, either at Buckingham Palace or Windsor.

On each side of this performance are two Guidos, the *Perseus and Andromeda*, and *Venus attired by the Graces*.* We give the preference to the former. The *Andromeda* is a fine, noble figure, in a striking and even daring position, with an impassioned and highly-wrought expression of features; and the whole scene is in harmony with the subject. The *Venus attired by the Graces* (though full of beauties, particularly the colouring of the flesh in the frail goddess) is formal and disjointed in the composition; and some of the actions are void of grace and even of decorum. We allude particularly to the *Maid-in-waiting*, who is combing her hair, and to the one tying on her sandals, with her arm crossing Venus's leg at right angles. The Cupid in the window is as light and wanton as a butterfly flying out of it. He may be said to flutter and hover in his own delights. There are two capital engravings of these pictures by Strange.

* These pictures are not in the public rooms at Windsor, but duplicates of them may be seen at the National Gallery. Nos. 87 and 90.

THE PICTURES AT HAMPTON COURT.

THIS palace is a very magnificent one, and, we think, has been undeservedly neglected. It is Dutch built, of handsome red brick, and belongs to a class of houses the taste for which appears to have been naturalised in this country along with the happy introduction of the houses of Orange and Hanover. The approach to it through Bushy Park is delightfully inspiring at this time of year; and the gardens about it, with their close-clipped holly hedges and arbours of evergreen, look an artificial summer all the year round. The statues that are interspersed do not freeze in winter, and are cool and classical in the warmer seasons. The *Toy Inn* stands opportunely at the entrance, to invite the feet of those who are tired of a straggling walk from Brentford or Kew, or oppressed with thought and wonder after seeing the Cartoons.

Besides these last, however, there are several fine pictures here. We shall pass over the Knellers, the Verrios, and the different portraits of the Royal Family, and come at once to the *Nine Muses* by Tintoret [138]. Or rather his Nine Muses are summed up in one, the back figure in the right hand corner, as you look at the picture, which is all grandeur, elegance, and grace. We should think that, in the *gusto* of form and a noble freedom of outline, Michael Angelo could hardly have surpassed this figure. The face, too, which is half turned round, is charmingly handsome. The back, the shoulders, the legs, are the perfection of bold delicacy expanded into full-blown luxuriance, and then retiring as it were from their own proud beauty and conscious charms into soft and airy loveliness—

“ Fine by degrees, and beautifully less.”

-Is it a Muse? Or is it not a figure formed for action more than contemplation? Perhaps this hypercritical objection may be true; and it might without any change of character or impropriety be supposed, from its buoyancy, its ease, and sinewy elasticity, to represent the quivered goddess shaping her bow for the chase. But at any rate it is the figure of a goddess, or of a woman in shape equal to a goddess. The colour is nearly gone, so that it has almost the tone of a black-and-white chalk drawing; and the effect of form remains pure and unrivalled. There are several other very pleasing and ably-drawn figures in the group, but they are eclipsed in the superior splendour of this one. So far the composition is faulty, for its balance is destroyed; and there are certain critics who could probably maintain that the picture would be better if this capital excellence in it had been deliberately left out: the picture would, indeed, have been more according to rule, and to the taste of those who judge, feel, and see by rule only!

Among the portraits which are curious is one of *Baccio Bandinelli* * [59], with his emblems and implements of sculpture about him, said to be by Correggio. We cannot pretend to give an opinion on this point; but it is a studious, powerful, and elaborately painted head. We find the name of Titian attached to two or three portraits in the Collection. There is one very fine one of a young man in black, with a black head of hair—the face seen in a three-quarter view, and the dark piercing eye, full of subtle meaning, looking round at you—which is probably by Titian, but certainly not (as it is pretended) of himself.† It has not the aquiline cast of features by which his own portraits are obviously distinguished. We have

* Mrs Jameson, however, observes that it bears no resemblance to the best authenticated portraits of this eminent sculptor.

† There are five portraits by Titian at Hampton Court. Nos. 38, 70, 100, 101, and 397. The one referred to is No. 100 or 101.

seen a print of this picture, in which it is said to be done for Ignatius Loyola. The portrait of a lady with green-and-white purpled sleeves [116] (like the leaves and flower of the water-lily, and as clear!) is admirable. It was in the Pall-Mall exhibition of the Old Masters a short time ago, and is by Sebastian del Piombo. The ease of the painting, the natural ease of the attitude, and the steady, sensible, *conversable* look of the countenance, place this in a class of features which one feels a wish to have always by one's side whenever there is a want of thought, or a flaw in the temper, that requires filling up or setting to rights by some agreeable and at the same time not over-exciting object. There are several *soi-disant* Parmegianos; one or two good Bassanos; a *Battle-Piece* [1] set down to Giulio Romano; * a coloured drawing (in one corner of a room) of a *Nymph* and *Satyr* is very fine; and some of Poelenberg's little disagreeable pictures of the same subject, in which the Satyrs look like paltry bits of painted wood, and the Nymphs are like glazed china ware. We have a prejudice against Poelenberg, which is a rare thing with us!

The *Cartoons* occupy a room by themselves—there are not many such rooms in the world. All other pictures look like oil and varnish to these: we are stopped and attracted by the colouring, the pencilling, the finishing, or the want of it—that is, by the instrumentalities of the art—but here the painter seems to have flung his *mind* upon the canvas; his thoughts, his great ideas alone prevail; there is nothing between us and the subject; we look through a frame, and see Scripture histories, and are made actual spectators of miraculous events. Not to speak it profoundly, they are a sort of *revelation* of the subjects of which they treat; there is an ease and freedom of manner about them

* It is a copy by Giulio Romano, after the Fresco in the Vatican, designed by Raffaele, and executed by Romano and others of his scholars.

which brings preternatural characters and situations home to us with the familiarity of common everyday occurrences; and while the figures fill, raise, and satisfy the mind, they seem to have cost the painter nothing. The Cartoons are *unique* productions in the art. They are mere intellectual, or rather *visible abstractions* of truth and nature. Everywhere else we see the means; here we arrive at the end apparently without any means. There is a Spirit at work in the divine creation before us. We are unconscious of any details, of any steps taken, of any progress made; we are aware only of comprehensive results, of whole masses and figures. The sense of power supersedes the appearance of effort. It is like a waking dream, vivid, but undistinguishable in member, joint, or limb; or it is as if we had ourselves seen the persons and things at some former period of our being, and that the drawing certain dotted lines upon coarse paper, by some unknown spell, brought back the entire and living images, and made them pass before us, palpable to thought, to feeling, and to sight. Perhaps not all is owing to genius: something of this effect may be ascribed to the simplicity of the vehicle employed in embodying the story, and something to the decayed and dilapidated state of the pictures themselves. They are the more majestic for being in ruin: we are struck chiefly with the truth of proportion and the range of conception: all the petty, meretricious part of the art is dead in them; the carnal is made spiritual, the corruptible has put on incorruption, and, amidst the wreck of colour and the mouldering of material beauty, nothing is left but a universe of thought, or the broad, imminent shadows of "calm contemplation and majestic pains!"

The first in order is the *Death of Ananias* [606], and it is one of the noblest of these noble designs. The effect is striking; and the contrast between the steadfast, commanding attitude of the Apostle, and the convulsed and prostrate figure of Ananias on the floor, is finely imagined.

It is much as if a group of persons on shore stood to witness the wreck of life and hope on the rocks and quicksands beneath them. The abruptness and severity of the transition are, however, broken and relieved by the other human interests in the picture. The Ananias is a masterly, a stupendous figure. The attitude, the drawing, the expression, the ease, the force, are alike wonderful. He falls so naturally that it seems as if a person could fall in no other way ; and yet of all the ways in which a human figure could fall, it is probably the most expressive of a person overwhelmed by and in the grasp of Divine vengeance. This is, in some measure, we apprehend, the secret of Raffaele's success. Most painters, in studying an attitude, puzzle themselves to find out what will be picturesque and what will be fine, and never discover it : Raffaele only thought how a person would stand or fall naturally in such or such circumstances, and the *picturesque* and the *fine* followed as matters of course. Hence the unaffected force and dignity of his style, which are only another name for truth and nature under impressive and momentous circumstances. The distraction of the face, the inclination of the head on one side, are as fine as possible, and the agony is just verging to that point in which it is relieved by death. The expression of ghastly wonder in the features of the man on the floor next him is also remarkable ; and the mingled beauty, grief, and horror in the female head behind can never be enough admired or extolled. The pain, the sudden and violent contraction of the muscles, is as intense as if a sharp instrument had been driven into the forehead, and yet the same sweetness triumphs there as ever, the most perfect self-command and dignity of demeanour. We could hazard a conjecture that this is what forms the great distinction between the natural style of Raffaele and the natural style of Hogarth. Both are equally *intense* ; but the one is intense littleness, meanness, vulgarity ; the other is intense grandeur, refinement

and sublimity. In the one we see common, or sometimes uncommon and painful, circumstances acting with all their force on narrow minds and deformed bodies, and bringing out distorted and violent efforts at expression ; in the other we see noble forms and lofty characters contending with adverse, or co-operating with powerful, impressions from without, and imparting their own unaltered grace and habitual composure to them. In Hogarth, generally, the face is excited and torn in pieces by some paltry interest of its own ; in Raffaele, on the contrary, it is expanded and ennobled by the contemplation of some event or object highly interesting in itself : that is to say, the passion in the one is intellectual and abstracted ; the passion in the other is petty, selfish, and confined. We have not thought it beneath the dignity of the subject to make this comparison between two of the most extraordinary and highly gifted persons that the world ever saw. If Raffaele had seen Hogarth's pictures, *he* would not have despised them. Those only can do it (and they are welcome !) who, wanting all that he had, can do nothing that he could not, or that they themselves pretend to accomplish by affectation and bombast.

Elymas the Sorcerer (607) stands next in order, and is equal in merit. There is a Roman sternness and severity in the general look of the scene. The figure of the apostle, who is inflicting the punishment of blindness on the impostor, is grand, commanding, full of ease and dignity ; and the figure of Elymas is blind all over, and is muffled up in its clothes from head to foot. A story is told of Mr Garrick's objecting to the natural effect of the action in the hearing of the late Mr West, who, in vindication of the painter, requested the celebrated comedian to close his eyes and walk across the room, when he instantly stretched out his hands, and began to grope his way with the exact attitude and expression of this noble study. It may be worth remarking here that this great painter and fine ob-

server of human nature has represented the magician with a hard iron visage and strong uncouth figure, made up of bones and muscles, as one not troubled with weak nerves, nor to be diverted from his purpose by idle scruples ; as one who repelled all sympathy with others, who was not to be moved a jot by their censures or prejudices against him, and who could break with ease through the cobweb snares which he laid for the credulity of mankind, without being once entangled in his own delusions. His outward form betrays the hard, unimaginative, self-willed understanding of the Sorcerer. There is a head (a profile) coming in on one side of the picture, which we would point out to our readers as one of the most finely relieved and best preserved in this series. The face of Elymas and some others in the picture have been a good deal hurt by time and ill-treatment. There is a *snuffy* look under the nose, as if the water-colour had been washed away in some damp lumber-room or unsheltered outhouse. The Cartoons have felt "the seasons' difference," being exposed to wind and rain, tossed about from place to place, and cut down by profane hands to fit them to one of their abodes ; so that it is altogether wonderful that, "through their looped and tattered wretchedness," any traces are seen of their original splendour and beauty. That they are greatly changed from what they were even a hundred years ago is evident from the heads in the Radcliffe Library at Oxford, which were cut out from one of them that was nearly destroyed by some accident, and from the large French engravings of single heads, done about the same time, which are as finished and correct as possible. Even Sir James Thornhill's copies bear testimony to the same effect. Though without the spirit of the originals, they have fewer blots and blotches in them, from having been better taken care of. A skeleton is barely left of the Cartoons ; but their mighty relics, like the bones of the mammoth, tell us what the entire and living fabric must have been.

In the *Gate Beautiful* [608] there is a profusion of what is fine, and of imposing contrasts. The twisted pillars have been found fault with ; but there they stand, and will for ever stand to answer all cavillers with their wreathed beauty. The St John in this Cartoon is an instance of what we have above hinted as to the ravages of time on these pictures. In the old French engraving (half the size of life) the features are exceedingly well marked and beautiful, whereas they are here in a great measure defaced ; and the hair, which is at present a mere clotted mass, is woven into graceful and waving curls,

“ Like to those hanging locks
Of young Apollo.”

Great inroads have been made on the delicate outline of the other parts, and the surface has been generally injured. The Beggars are as fine as ever : they do not lose by the squalid condition of their garb or features, but remain patriarchs of poverty, and mighty in disease and infirmity, as if they crawled and grovelled on the pavement of heaven. They are lifted above this world ! The child carrying the doves at his back is an exquisite example of grace, and innocence, and buoyant motion ; and the face and figure of the young woman seen directly over him give a glad welcome to the eye in their fresh, unalloyed, and radiant sweetness and joy. This head seems to have been spared from the unhallowed touch of injury, like a little isle or circlet of beauty. It was guarded, we may suppose, by its own heavenly, feminine look of smiling loveliness. There is another very fine female head on the opposite side of the picture, of a graver cast, looking down, and nearly in profile. The only part of this Cartoon that we object to, or should be for *turning out*, is the lubberly naked figure of a boy close to one of the pillars, who seems to have no sort of business there, and is an obvious eyesore.

The *Miraculous Draught of Fishes* [609] is admirable for the clearness and prominence of the figures, for the vigorous marking of the muscles, for the fine expression of devout emotion in the St Peter, and for the calm dignity in the attitude, and divine benignity in the countenance of the Christ. Perhaps this head expresses, more than any other that was ever attempted, the blended meekness, benevolence, and sublimity in the character of our Saviour. The whole figure is so still, so easy, it almost floats in air, and seems to sustain the boat by the secret sense of power. We shall not attempt to make a formal reply to the old objection to the diminutive size of the boat, but we confess it appears to us to enhance the value of the miracle. Its load swells proportionably in comparison, and the waves conspire to bear it up. The storks on the shore are not the least animated or elevated part of the picture; they exult in the display of divine power, and share in the prodigality of the occasion.

The *Sacrifice at Lystra* [610] has the marks of Raffaele's hand on every part of it. You see and almost hear what is passing. What a pleasing relief to the confused, busy scene are the two children piping at the altar! How finely, how unexpectedly, but naturally, that innocent rustic head of a girl comes in over the grave countenances and weighty, thoughtful heads of the group of attendant priests! The animals brought to be sacrificed are equally fine in the expression of terror, and the action of resistance to the rude force by which they are dragged along.

A great deal has been said and written on the *St Paul Preaching at Athens* [611]. The features of excellence in this composition are indeed so bold and striking as hardly to be mistaken. The abrupt figure of St Paul, his hands raised in that fervent appeal to Him who "dwelleth not in temples made with hands," such as are seen in gorgeous splendour all around, the circle of his auditors, the noble and pointed diversity of heads, the one wrapped in thought

and in its cowl, another resting on a crutch and earnestly scanning the face of the Apostle rather than his doctrine, the careless attention of the Epicurean philosopher, the fine young heads of the disciples of the Porch or the Academy, the clenched fist and eager curiosity of the man in front as if he was drinking sounds, give this picture a superiority over all the others for popular and intelligible effect. We do not think that it is therefore the best, but it is the easiest to describe and to remember.

The *Giving of the Keys* [612] is the last of them : it is at present at Somerset House. There is no set purpose here, no studied contrast : it is an aggregation of grandeur and high feeling. The disciples gather round Christ, like a flock of sheep listening to some divine shepherd. The figure of their Master is sublime : his countenance and attitude "in act to speak." The landscape is also extremely fine and of a soothing character. Everything falls into its place in these pictures. The figures seem to stop just where their business and feelings bring them : not a fold in the draperies can be disposed of for the better or otherwise than it is.

It would be in vain to enumerate the particular figures, or to explain the story of works so well known : what we have aimed at has been to show the spirit that breathes through them, and we shall count ourselves fortunate if we have not sullied them with our praise. We do not care about some works ; but these were sacred to our imaginations, and we should be sorry indeed to have profaned them by description or criticism. We have hurried through our unavoidable task with fear, and look back to it with doubt.

THE GROSVENOR COLLECTION OF PICTURES.

WE seldom quit a mansion like that of which we have here to give some account, and return homewards, but we think of Warton's "Sonnet written after seeing Wilton House:"—

"From Pembroke's princely dome, where mimic art
Decks with a magic hand the dazzling bowers,
Its living hues where the warm pencil pours,
And breathing forms from the rude marble start,
How to life's humbler scenes can I depart?
My breast all glowing from those gorgeous tow'rs,
In my low cell how cheat the sullen hours?
Vain the complaint! For Fancy can impart
(To Fate superior, and to Fortune's doom)
Whate'er adorns the stately-storied hall:
She, 'mid the dungeon's solitary gloom,
Can dress the Graces in their Attic pall,
Bid the green landscape's vernal beauty bloom,
And in bright trophies clothe the twilight wall."

Having repeated these lines to ourselves, we sit quietly down in our chairs to con over our task, abstract the idea of exclusive property, and think only of those images of beauty and of grandeur which we can carry away with us in our minds, and have everywhere before us. Let us take some of these, and describe them how we can.

There is one—we see it now—the *Man with a Hawk* by Rembrandt. "In our mind's eye, Horatio!" What is the difference between this idea which we have brought away with us, and the picture on the wall? Has it lost any of its tone, its ease, its depth? The head turns round in the same graceful moving attitude, the eye carelessly

meets ours, the tufted beard grows to the chin, the hawk flutters and balances himself on his favourite perch, his master's hand ; and a shadow seems passing over the picture, just leaving a light in one corner of it behind, to give a livelier effect to the whole. There is no mark of the pencil, no jagged points or solid masses ; it is all air, and Twilight might be supposed to have drawn his veil across it. It is as much an idea on the canvas as it is in the mind. There are no means employed, as far as you can discover—you see nothing but a simple, grand, and natural effect. It is impalpable as a thought, intangible as a sound ; nay, the shadows have a breathing harmony, and fling round an undulating echo of themselves,

“ At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiles !”

In the opposite corner of the room is a *Portrait of a Female* (by the same), in which everything is as clear, and pointed, and brought out into the open day, as in the former it is withdrawn from close and minute inspection. The face glitters with smiles, as the ear-rings sparkle with light. The whole is stiff, starched, and formal, has a pearly or metallic look, and you throughout mark the most elaborate and careful finishing. The two pictures make an antithesis where they are placed ; but this was not probably at all intended : it proceeds simply from the difference in the nature of the subject, and the truth and appropriate power of the treatment of it. In the middle between these two pictures is a small history by Rembrandt of the *Salutation of Elizabeth*, in which the figures come out straggling, disjointed, quaint, ugly as a dream, but partake of the mysterious significance of preternatural communication, and are seen through the visible gloom, or through the dimmer night of antiquity. Light and shade, not form nor feeling, were the elements of which Rembrandt composed the finest poetry, and his imagination brooded

only over the medium through which we discern objects, leaving the objects themselves uninspired, unhallowed, and untouched !

We must go through our account of these pictures as they start up in our memory, not according to the order of their arrangement, for want of a proper set of memorandums. Our friend Mr Gummow, of Cleveland House, had a nice little neatly bound duodecimo catalogue, of great use as a *vade mecum* to occasional visitants or absent critics ; but here we have no such advantage, and to take notes before company is a thing that we abhor. It has a look of pilfering something from the pictures. While we merely enjoy the sight of the objects of art before us, or sympathise with the approving gaze of the greater beauty around us, it is well—there is a feeling of luxury and refinement in the employment ; but take out a pocket-book, and begin to scribble notes in it—the date of the picture, the name, the room, some paltry defect, some pitiful discovery (not worth remembering), the non-essentials, the mechanic *commonplaces* of the art—and the sentiment is gone : you show that you have a further object in view, a job to execute, a feeling foreign to the place, and different from every one else ; you become a butt and a mark for ridicule to the rest of the company ; and you retire with your pockets full of wisdom from a saloon of art, with as little right as you have to carry off the dessert (or what you have not been able to consume) from an inn or a banquet. Such, at least, is our feeling ; and we had rather make a mistake now and then as to a *numero*, or the name of a room in which a picture is placed, than spoil our whole pleasure in looking at a fine collection, and consequently the pleasure of the reader in learning what we thought of it.

Among the pictures that haunt our eye in this way is the *Adoration of the Angels* by N. Poussin. It is one of his finest works—elegant, graceful, full of feeling, happy,

enlivening. It is treated rather as a classical than as a sacred subject. The angels are more like cupids than angels. They are, however, beautifully grouped, with various and expressive attitudes, and remind one, by their half-antic, half-serious homage, of the line—

“Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.”

They are laden with baskets of flowers—the tone of the picture is rosy, florid; it seems to have been painted at

“The breezy call of incense-breathing morn;”

and the angels overhead sport and gambol in the air with butterfly wings, like butterflies. It is one of those rare productions that satisfy the mind, and from which we turn away, not from weariness, but from a fulness of delight. The *Israelites returning Thanks in the Wilderness* is a fine picture, but inferior to this. Near it is a group of *Angels*, said to be by Correggio. The expressions are grotesque and fine, but the colouring does not seem to us to be his. The texture of the flesh, as well as the hue, too much resembles the skin of ripe fruit. We meet with several fine landscapes of the two Poussins (particularly one of a rocky eminence by Gaspar) in the room before you come to the Rembrandts, in which the mixture of grey rock and green trees and shrubs is beautifully managed, with striking truth and clearness.

Among detached and smaller pictures we would wish to point out to the attention of our readers an exquisite head of a *Child* by Andrea del Sarto, and a fine *Salvator* in the inner room of all: in the room leading to it, a pleasing, glassy Cuyp, an airy earthly-looking Teniers, and a *Mother and Sleeping Child* by Guido: in the saloon, a *St Catherine*, one of Parmegiano's most graceful pictures; a *St Agnes* by Domenichino, full of sweetness, thought, and feeling; and two pictures by Raffaele, that have a look as if painted on paper; a *Repose in Egypt*, and *St Luke*

Painting the Virgin, both admirable for drawing and expression, and a rich, purple, *crayon* tone of colouring. Wherever Raffaele is, there is grace and dignity, and an informing soul. In the last-mentioned room, near the entrance, is also a *Conversion of St Paul* by Rubens, of infinite spirit, brilliancy, and delicacy of execution.

But it is in the large room to the right that the splendour and power of Rubens reign triumphant and unrivalled, and yet he has here to contend with highest works and names. The four large pictures of ecclesiastical subjects, the *Meeting of Abraham and Melchisedec*, the *Gathering of Manna*, the *Evangelists*, and the *Fathers of the Church*, have no match in this country for scenic pomp and dazzling airy effect. The figures are colossal; and it might be said, without much extravagance, that the drawing and colouring are so too.* He seems to have painted with a huge sweeping gigantic pencil, and with broad masses of unalloyed colour. The spectator is (as it were) thrown back by the pictures, and surveys them as if placed at a stupendous height as well as distance from him. This, indeed, is their history: they were painted to be placed in some Jesuit's church abroad at an elevation of forty or fifty feet, and Rubens would have started to see them in a drawing-room or on the ground. Had he foreseen such a result, he would perhaps have added something to the correctness of the features, and taken something from the gorgeous crudeness of the colour. But there is grandeur of composition, involution of form, motion, character in its vast, rude outline, the imposing contrast of sky and flesh, fine grotesque heads of old age, florid youth, and fawn-like beauty!

You see nothing but patriarchs, primeval men and women, walking among temples or treading the sky—or the earth, with an “air and gesture proudly eminent,” as if they trod the sky—when man first rose from nothing to

* We heard it well said the other day, that “Rubens’ pictures were the palette of Titian.”

his native sublimity. We cannot describe these pictures in their details; they are one staggering blow after another of the mighty hand that traced them. All is cast in the same mould, all is filled with the same spirit, all is clad in the same gaudy robe of light. Rubens was at home here; his *forte* was the processional, the showy, and the imposing; he grew almost drunk and wanton with the sense of his power over such subjects; and he, in fact, left these pictures unfinished in some particulars, that, for the place and object for which they were intended, they might be perfect. They were done (it is said) for tapestries from small designs, and carried nearly to their present state of finishing by his scholars.

There is a smaller picture in the same room, *Ixion embracing the false Juno*, which points out and defines their style of art and adaptation for remote effect. There is a delicacy in this last picture (which is, however, of the size of life) that makes it look like a miniature in comparison. The flesh of the women is like lilies, or like milk strewed upon ivory. It is soft and pearly; but in the larger pictures it is heightened beyond nature, the veil of air between the spectator and the figures, when placed in the proper position, being supposed to give the last finishing. Near the *Ixion* is an historical female figure by Guido, which will not bear any comparison for transparency and delicacy of tint with the two Junos. Rubens was undoubtedly the greatest *scene-painter* in the world, if we except Paul Veronese, and the Fleming was to him flat and insipid. "It is place which lessens and sets off."

We once saw two pictures of Rubens' hung by the side of the *Marriage of Cana* in the Louvre, and they looked nothing. The Paul Veronese nearly occupied the side of a large room (the modern French exhibition-room), and it was like looking through the side of a wall, or at a splendid banquet and gallery full of people and full of interest. The texture of the two Rubenses was *woolly*, or flowery,

or *satiny*—it was all alike ; but in the *Venetian's* great work the pillars were of stone, the floor was marble, the tables were wood, the dresses were various stuffs, the sky was air, the flesh was flesh, the groups were living men and women. Turks, emperors, ladies, painter, musicians—all was real, dazzling, profuse, astonishing. It seemed as if the very dogs under the table might get up and bark, or that at the sound of a trumpet the whole assembly might rise and disperse in different directions, in an instant.

This picture, however, was considered as the triumph of Paul Veronese, and the two by the Flemish artist that hung beside it were very inferior to some of his, and assuredly to those now exhibited in the Gallery at Lord Grosvenor's. Neither do we wish by this allusion to disparage Rubens ; for we think him on the whole a greater genius and a greater painter than the rival we have here opposed to him, as we may attempt to show when we come to speak of the Collection at Blenheim.

There are some divine Claudes in the same room ; and they, too, are like looking through a window at a select and conscious landscape. There are five or six, all capital for the composition, and highly preserved. There is a strange and somewhat *anomalous* one of *Christ on the Mount*, as if the artist had tried to contradict himself, and yet it is Claude all over. Nobody but he could paint one single atom of it. The *mount* is stuck up in the very centre of the picture, against all rule, like a huge dirt-pie ; but then what an air breathes round it, what a sea encircles it, what verdure clothes it, what flocks and herds feed round it, immortal and unchanged !

Close by it is the *Arch of Constantine* ; but this is to us a bitter disappointment. A print of it hung in a little room in the country, where we used to contemplate it by the hour together, and day after day, and "*sigh our souls*" into the picture. It was the most graceful, the most perfect of all Claude's compositions. The temple seemed to come

forward into the middle of the picture, as in a dance, to show its unrivalled beauty, the Vashti of the scene! Young trees bend their branches over it with playful tenderness; and on the opposite side of a stream, at which cattle stooped to drink, there grew a stately grove, erect, with answering looks of beauty: the distance between retired into air and gleaming shores. Never was there scene so fair, "so absolute, that in itself summed all delight." How did we wish to compare it with the picture! The trees, we thought, must be of vernal green—the sky recalled the mild dawn or softened evening. No, the branches of the trees are red, the sky burned up, the whole hard and uncomfortable. This is not the picture, the print at which we used to gaze at enamoured—there is another somewhere that we still shall see!

There are finer specimens of the *Morning and Evening of the Roman Empire* at Lord Radnor's, in Wiltshire. Those here have a more polished, *cleaned* look, but we cannot prefer them on that account. In one corner of the room is a *St Bruno* by Andrea Sacchi—a fine study, with pale face and garments, a saint dying (as it should seem), but, as he dies, conscious of an undying spirit. The old Catholic painters put the soul of religion into their pictures, for they felt it within themselves.

There are two Titians—the *Woman taken in Adultery*, and a large mountainous landscape with the story of *Jupiter and Antiope*. The last is rich and striking, but not equal to his best; and the former we think one of his most exceptional pictures, both in character and (we add) colouring. In the last particular it is tricky, and discovers instead of concealing its art. The flesh is not transparent, but a *transparency*! Let us not forget a fine Snyders, a *Boar-hunt*, which is highly spirited and natural as far as the animals are concerned, but is *patchy*, and wants the tone and general effect that Rubens would have thrown over it. In the middle of the right-hand side of the room

is the *Meeting of Jacob and Laban* by Murillo. It is a lively out-of-door scene, full of bustle and expression; but it rather brings to us the tents and faces of two bands of gipsies meeting on a common heath, than carries us back to the remote times, places, and events treated of. Murillo was the painter of nature, not of the imagination.

There is a *Sleeping Child* by him over the door of the saloon (an admirable cabinet picture), and another of a boy, a little spirited rustic, brown, glowing, "of the earth, earthy," the flesh thoroughly baked, as if he had come out of an oven; and who regards you with a look as if he was afraid you might bind him apprentice to some trade or handicraft, or send him to a Sunday-school, and so put an end to his short, happy, careless life—to his lessons from that great teacher, the Sun—to his physic, the air—to his bed, the earth—and to the soul of his very being, Liberty!

The first room you enter is filled with some very good and some very bad English pictures. There is Hogarth's *Distressed Poet*; the *Death of Wolfe* by West, which is not so good as the print would lead us to expect; an excellent whole-length portrait of a youth by Gainsborough; *A Man with a Hawk* by Northcote; and *Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse* by Sir Joshua. This portrait Lord Grosvenor bought the other day for £1760. It has risen in price every time it has been sold. Sir Joshua sold it for two or three hundred pounds to a Mr Calonne. It was then purchased by Mr Desenfans, who parted with it to Mr William Smith for a larger sum (we believe £500); and at the sale of that gentleman's pictures it was bought by Mr Watson Taylor, the last proprietor, for a thousand guineas.

While it was in the possession of Mr Desenfans, a copy of it was taken by a pupil of Sir Joshua's, of the name of Score, which is now in the Dulwich Gallery, and which we always took for an original. The size of the original

is larger than the copy. There was a dead child painted at the bottom of it, which Sir Joshua Reynolds afterwards disliked, and he had the canvas doubled upon the frame to hide it. It has been let out again, but we did not observe whether the child was there. We think it had better not be seen.

We do not wish to draw invidious comparisons, yet we may say, in reference to the pictures in Lord Grosvenor's Collection, and those at Cleveland House, that the former are distinguished most by elegance, brilliancy, and high preservation; while those belonging to the Marquis of Stafford look more like old pictures, and have a corresponding tone of richness and magnificence. We have endeavoured to do justice to both, but we confess they have fallen very short even of our own hopes and expectations.

PICTURES AT WILTON, STOURHEAD, &c.

SALISBURY PLAIN, barren as it is, is rich in collections and monuments of art. There are within the distance of a few miles, Wilton, Longford Castle, Fonthill Abbey, Stourhead, and last, though not least worthy to be mentioned, Stonehenge, that "huge dumb heap" that stands on the blasted heath, and looks like a group of giants bewildered, not knowing what to do, encumbering the earth, and turned to stone while in the act of warring on Heaven. An attempt has lately been made to give to it an antediluvian origin. Its mystic round is in all probability fated to remain inscrutable, a mighty maze without a plan; but still the imagination, when once curiosity and wonder have taken possession of it, heaves with its restless load, launches conjecture farther and farther back beyond the landmarks of time, and strives to bear down all impediments in its course, as the ocean strives to overleap some vast promontory!

Fonthill Abbey, which was formerly hermetically sealed against all intrusion,* is at present open to the whole world; and Wilton House and Longford Castle, which

* This is not absolutely true. Mr Banks the younger, and another young gentleman, formed an exception to this rule, and contrived to get into the Abbey grounds, in spite of warning, just as the reclusive proprietor happened to be passing by the spot. Instead, however, of manifesting any displeasure, he gave them a most polite reception, showed them whatever they expressed a wish to see, asked them to dinner, and after passing the day in the greatest conviviality, dismissed them by saying "that they might get out as they got in." This was certainly a good jest. Our youthful adventurers on forbidden ground, in the midst of their festive security, might have expected some such shrewd turn from the antithetical genius of the author of 'Vathek,' who makes his hero, in a paroxysm of impatience, call out for "the Koran and sugar!"

were formerly open to every one, are at present shut except to *petitioners* and a favoured few. Why is this greater degree of strictness in the latter instances resorted to? In proportion as the taste for works of art becomes more general, do these noble persons wish to set bounds to and disappoint public curiosity? Do they think that the admiration bestowed on fine pictures or rare sculpture lessens their value, or divides the property as well as the pleasure with the possessor? Or do they think that, setting aside the formality of these new regulations, three persons in the course of a whole year would intrude out of an impertinent curiosity to see *their* houses and furniture, without having a just value for them as objects of art? Or is the expense of keeping servants to show the apartments made the plea of this churlish, narrow system? The public are ready enough to pay servants for their attendance, and those persons are quite as forward to do this who make a pilgrimage to such places on foot as those who approach them in a post-chaise or on horseback with a livery-servant, which, it seems, is the prescribed and fashionable etiquette! Whatever is the cause, we are sorry for it, more particularly as it compels us to speak of these two admired Collections from memory only. It is several years since we saw them, but there are some impressions of this sort that are proof against time.

Lord Radnor has the two famous Claudes, the *Morning* and *Evening of the Roman Empire*. Though as landscapes they are neither so brilliant, nor finished, nor varied, as some of this artist's works, there is a weight and concentration of historic feeling about them which many of his allegorical productions want. In the first, half-finished buildings and massy columns rise amidst the dawning effulgence that is streaked with rims of inextinguishable light; and a noble tree in the foreground, ample, luxuriant, hangs and broods over the growing design. There is a dim mistiness spread over the scene, as in the beginning of

things. The *Evening*, the companion to it, is even finer. It has all the gorgeous pomp that attends the meeting of Night and Day, and a flood of glory still prevails over the coming shadows. In the cool of the evening some cattle are feeding on the brink of a glassy stream that reflects a mouldering ruin on one side of the picture ; and so precise is the touch, so true, so firm is the pencilling, so classical the outline, that they give one the idea of sculptured cattle biting the short green turf, and seem an enchanted herd ! They appear stamped on the canvas to remain there for ever, or as if nothing could root them from the spot. Truth with beauty suggests the feeling of immortality. No Dutch picture ever suggested this feeling. The objects are real, it is true ; but not being beautiful or impressive, the mind feels no wish to mould them into a permanent reality, to bind them fondly on the heart, or lock them in the imagination as in a sacred recess, safe from the envious canker of time. No one ever felt a longing, a sickness of the heart, to see a Dutch landscape twice ; but those of Claude, after an absence of years, have this effect, and produce a kind of calenture. The reason of the difference is that, in mere literal copies from nature, where the objects are not interesting in themselves, the only attraction is to see the felicity of the execution ; and having once witnessed this, we are satisfied. But there is nothing to stir the fancy, to keep alive the yearnings of passion. We remember one other picture (and but one) in Lord Radnor's Collection that was of this *ideal* character. It was a *Magdalen* by Guido, with streaming hair, and streaming eyes looking upwards—full of sentiment and beauty.

There is but one fine picture at Wilton House—the *Family Van dyck*—with a noble Gallery of antique marbles, which we may pronounce to be invaluable to the lover of art or to the student of history or human nature. Roman emperors or proconsuls, the poets, orators, and almost all the great men of antiquity, are here “ranged in a row,”

and palpably embodied either in genuine or traditional busts. Some of these indicate an almost preternatural capacity and inspired awfulness of look, particularly some of the earlier sages and fabulists of Greece, which we apprehend to be *ideal* representations ; while other more modern and better authenticated ones of celebrated Romans are distinguished by the strength and simplicity of common English heads of the best class. The large picture of the *Pembroke Family* by Vandyck is unrivalled in its kind. It is a history of the time. It throws us nearly two centuries back to men and manners that no longer exist. The members of a noble house ('tis a hundred and sixty years since) are brought together *in propria personâ*, and appear in all the varieties of age, character, and costume. There are the old Lord and Lady Pembroke, who "keep their state" raised somewhat above the other groups—the one a lively old gentleman, who seems as if he could once have whispered a flattering tale in a fair lady's ear ; his help-mate looking a little fat and sulky by his side, probably calculating the expense of the picture, and not well understanding the event of it : there are the daughters, pretty, well-dressed, elegant girls, but somewhat insipid, sentimental, and vacant : then there are the two eldest sons, that might be said to have walked out of Mr Burke's description of the age of chivalry—the one a perfect courtier, a carpet-knight, smooth-faced, handsome, almost effeminate, that seems to have moved all his life to "the mood of lutes and soft recorders," decked in silks and embroidery, like the tender flower issuing from its glossy folds ; the other the gallant soldier, shrewd, bold, hardy, with spurred heel and tawny buskins, ready to "mount on barbed steeds, and witch the world with noble horsemanship"—down to the untutored, carrot-headed boy, the *Goose Gibbie* of the piece, who appears to have been just dragged from the farmyard to sit for his picture, and stares about him in as great a heat and fright as if he had dropped

from the clouds. All in this admirable, living composition is in its place, in keeping, and bears the stamp of the age and of the master's hand. Even the oak panels have an elaborate, antiquated look, and the furniture has an aspect of cumbrous, conscious dignity. It should not be omitted that it was here (in the house or the adjoining magnificent grounds) that Sir Philip Sidney wrote his "*Arcadia*;" and the story of Musidorus and Philoclea, of Mopsa and Dorcas, is quaintly traced on oval panels in the principal drawing-room.

It is on this account that we are compelled to find fault with the Collection at Fonthill Abbey, because it exhibits no picture of remarkable eminence that can be ranked as an heirloom of the imagination, which cannot be spoken of but our thoughts take wing and stretch themselves towards it, the very name of which is music to the instructed ear. We would not give a rush to see any collection that does not contain some single picture, at least, that haunts us with an uneasy sense of joy for twenty miles of road, that may cheer us at intervals for twenty years of life to come. Without some such thoughts as these riveted in the brain, the lover and disciple of art would truly be "of all men the most miserable;" but with them hovering round him, and ever and anon shining with their glad lustre into his sleepless soul, he has nothing to fear from fate or fortune. We look, and lo! here is one at our side, facing us, though far distant. It is the Young Man's head in the Louvre by Titian, that it is not unlike Jeronimo della Porretta in Sir Charles Grandison. What a look is there of calm, unalterable self-possession—

"Above all pain, all passion, and all pride;"

that draws the evil out of human life, that, while we look at it, transfers the same sentiment to our own breasts, and makes us feel as if nothing mean or little could ever disturb us again! This is high art; the rest is mechanical. But

there is nothing like this at Fonthill (oh ! no), but everything which is the very reverse. As this, however, is an extreme opinion of ours, and may be a prejudice, we shall endeavour to support it by facts. There is not, then, a single Titian in all this boasted and expensive Collection—there is not a Raffaele—there is not a Rubens (except one small sketch)—there is not a Guido, nor a Vandyck—there is not a Rembrandt—there is not a Nicolas Poussin, nor a fine Claude. The two Altieri Claudes, which might have redeemed Fonthill, Mr Beckford sold. What shall we say to a collection which uniformly and deliberately rejects every great work and every great name in art to make room for idle rarities and curiosities of mechanical skill ? It was hardly necessary to build a cathedral to set up a toy-shop ! Who would paint a miniature picture to hang it at the top of the Monument ? This huge pile (capable of better things) is cut up into a parcel of little rooms, and those little rooms are stuck full of little pictures and *bijouterie*. Mr Beckford may talk of his *Diamond Berchem*, and so on : this is but the language of a *petit-maître* in art ; but the author of “*Vathek*” (with his leave) is not a *petit-maître*. His genius, as a writer, “hath a devil :” his taste in pictures is the quintessence and rectified spirit of *still life*. He seems not to be susceptible of the poetry of painting, or else to set his face against it. It is obviously a first principle with him to exclude whatever has feeling or imagination—to polish the surface and suppress the soul of art—to proscribe, by a sweeping clause or at one fell swoop, everything approaching to grace, or beauty, or grandeur—to crush the sense of pleasure or of power in embryo—and to reduce all nature and art, as far as possible, to the texture and level of a china dish—smooth, glittering, cold, and unfeeling ! We do not object so much to the predilection for Teniers, Wouvermans, or Ostade—we like to see natural objects naturally painted—but we unequivocally hate the affectedly mean, the elaborately little,

the ostentatiously perverse and distorted, Poelemborg's walls of amber, Mieris's groups of steel, Vanderwerf's ivory flesh; yet these are the chief delights of the late proprietor of Fonthill Abbey! Is it that his mind is "a volcano burnt out," and that he likes his senses to repose and be gratified with Persian carpets and enamelled pictures? Or are there not traces of the same infirmity of feeling even in the high-souled Vathek, who compliments the complexion of the two pages of Fakreddin as being equal to "the porcelain of Franguestan"? Alas! who would have thought that the Caliph Vathek would have dwindled down into an Emperor of China and King of Japan? But so it is.

Stourhead, the seat of Sir Richard Colt Hoare, did not answer our expectations. But Stourton, the village where it stands, made up for our disappointment. After passing the park gate, which is a beautiful and venerable relic, you descend into Stourton by a sharp-winding declivity, almost like going underground, between high hedges of laurel-trees, and with an expanse of woods and water spread beneath. It is a sort of rural Herculaneum, a subterranean retreat. The inn is like a modernised guard-house; the village church stands on a lawn without any enclosure; a row of cottages facing it, with their white-washed walls and flaunting honeysuckles, are neatness itself. Everything has an air of elegance, and yet tells a tale of other times. It is a place that might be held sacred to stillness and solitary musing! The adjoining mansion of Stourhead commands an extensive view of Salisbury Plain, whose undulating swells show the earth in its primeval simplicity, bare, with naked breasts, and varied in its appearance only by the shadows of the clouds that pass across it. The view without is pleasing and singular: there is a little within doors to beguile attention. There is one masterpiece of colouring by Paul Veronese, a naked child with a dog. The tone of the flesh is perfection itself. On praising this picture (which we always do when we like a thing), we were told it

had been criticised by a great judge, Mr Beckford of Fonthill, who had found fault with the execution as too coarse and muscular. We do not wonder—it is not like his own turnery ware! We should also mention an exquisite Holbein, the *Head of a Child*, and a very pleasing little landscape by Wilson. Besides these, there are some capital pen-and-ink drawings (views in Venice) by Canaletti, and three large copies after Guido of *the Venus attired by the Graces*, *the Andromeda*, and *Herodius's Daughter*. They breathe the soul of softness and grace, and remind one of those fair, sylph-like forms that sometimes descend upon the earth with fatal, fascinating looks, and that “tempt but to betray.” After the cabinet pictures at Fonthill, even a good copy of a Guido is a luxury and a relief to the mind: it is something to inhale the divine airs that play around his figures, and we are satisfied if we can but “trace his footsteps, and his skirts far off behold.” The rest of this Collection is, for the most part, *trash*: either Italian pictures painted in the beginning of the last century, or English ones in the beginning of this. It gave us pain to see some of the latter; and we willingly draw a veil over the humiliation of the art, in the age and country that we live in. We ought, however, to mention a portrait of a youth (the present proprietor of Stourhead) by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which is elegant, brilliant, “though in ruins;” and a spirited portrait by Northcote, of a lady talking on her fingers, may, perhaps, challenge an exception for itself to the above general censure.

We wish our readers to go to Petworth, the seat of Lord Egremont, where they will find the coolest grottos and the finest Vandeyks in the world. There are eight or ten of the latter that are not to be surpassed by the art of man, and that we have no power either to admire or praise as they deserve. For simplicity, for richness, for truth of nature, for airiness of execution, nothing ever was or can be finer. We will only mention those of the Earl and

Countess of Northumberland, Lord Newport, and Lord Goring, Lord Strafford, and Lady Carr, and the Duchess of Devonshire. He who possesses these portraits is rich indeed, if he has an eye to see and a heart to feel them.

The one of *Lord Northumberland in the Tower* is not so good, though it is thought better by the multitude. That is, there is a subject—something to talk about ; but, in fact, the expression is not that of grief, or thought, or of dignified resignation, but of a man in ill-health. Vandyck was a mere portrait-painter, but he was a perfect one. His *forte* was not the romantic or pathetic ; he was “of the court, courtly.” He had a patent from the hand of nature to paint lords and ladies in prosperity and quite at their ease. There are some portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds in this Collection ; and there are people who persist in naming him and Vandyck in the same day. The rest of the Collection consists (for the most part) of *staircase* and family pictures. But there are some admirable statues to be seen here, that it would ask a morning’s leisure to study properly.

PICTURES AT BURLEIGH HOUSE.

BURLEIGH! thy groves are leafless, thy walls are naked,

“And dull, cold winter does inhabit here.”

The yellow evening rays gleam through thy fretted Gothic windows ; but I only feel the rustling of withered branches strike chill to my breast ; it was not so twenty years ago. Thy groves were leafless then as now : it was the middle of winter twice that I visited thee before ; but the lark mounted in the sky, and the sun smote my youthful blood with its slant ray, and the ploughman whistled as he drove his team afield ; hope spread out its glad vista through thy fair domains, O Burleigh ! Fancy decked thy walls with works of sovereign art, and it was spring, not winter, in my breast. All is still the same, like a petrification of the mind—the same thing in the same places ; but their effect is not the same upon me. I am twenty years the worse for *wear and tear*. What is become of the never-ending studious thoughts that brought their own reward or promised good to mankind ? of the tears that started welcome and unbidden ? of the sighs that whispered future peace ? of the smiles that shone, not in my face indeed, but that cheered my heart, and made a sunshine there when all was gloom around ? That fairy vision—that invisible glory, by which I was once attended—ushered into life, has left my side, and “faded to the light of common day,” and I now see what is, or has been—not what may lie hid in time’s bright circle and golden chaplet ! Perhaps this is the characteristic difference between youth and a later period of life—that we, by degrees, learn to take things more as we

find them, call them more by their right names; that we feel the warmth of summer, but the winter's cold as well; that we see beauties, but can spy defects in the fairest face; and no longer look at everything through the genial atmosphere of our own existence. We grow more literal and less credulous every day, lose much enjoyment, and gain some useful, and more useless, knowledge. The second time I passed along the road that skirts Burleigh Park, the morning was dank and "ways were mire." I saw and felt it not: my mind was otherwise engaged. Ah! thought I, there is that fine old head by Rembrandt; there, within those cold grey walls, the painter of old age is enshrined, immortalised in some of his inimitable works! The name of Rembrandt lives in the fame of him who stamped it with renown, while the name of Burleigh is kept up by the present owner. An artist survives in the issue of his brain to all posterity—a lord is nothing without the issue of his body lawfully begotten, and is lost in a long line of illustrious ancestors. So much higher is genius than rank—such is the difference between fame and title! A great name in art lasts for centuries—it requires twenty generations of a noble house to keep alive the memory of the first founder for the same length of time. So I reasoned, and was not a little proud of my discovery.

In this dreaming mood, dreaming of deathless works and deathless names, I went on to Peterborough, passing, as it were, under an archway of fame,

"And, still walking under,
Found some new matter to look up and wonder."

I had business there: I will not say what. I could at this time do nothing. I could not write a line—I could not draw a stroke. "I was brutish;" though not "warlike as the wolf, nor subtle as the fox for prey." In words, in looks, in deeds, I was no better than a changeling. Why, then, do I set so much value on my existence formerly?

O God ! that I could but be for one day, one hour, but for an instant (to feel it in all the plenitude of unconscious bliss, and take one long, last, lingering draught of that full brimming cup of thoughtless freedom), what then I was—that I might, as in a trance, a waking dream, hear the hoarse murmur of the bargemen, as the Minster tower appeared in the dim twilight, come up from the willowy stream, sounding low and underground like the voice of the bittern ;—that I might paint that field opposite the window where I lived, and feel that there was a green, dewy moisture in the tone, beyond my pencil's reach, but thus gaining almost a new sense, and watching the birth of new objects without me—that I might stroll down Peterborough bank (a winter's day), and see the fresh marshes stretching out in endless level perspective (as if Paul Potter had painted them), with the cattle, the windmills, and the red-tiled cottages gleaming in the sun to the very verge of the horizon ; and watch the fieldfares in innumerable flocks, gamboling in the air, and sporting in the sun, and racing before the clouds, making summersaults, and dazzling the eye by throwing themselves into a thousand figures and movements ; that I might go, as then, a pilgrimage to the town where my mother was born, and visit the poor farmhouse where she was brought up, and lean upon the gate where she told me she used to stand when a child of ten years old and look at the setting sun !—I could do all this still, but with different feelings. As our hopes leave us, we lose even our interest and regrets for the past. I had at this time, simple as I seemed, many resources. I could in some sort “play at bowls with the sun and moon ;” or at any rate there was no question in metaphysics that I could not bandy to and fro, as one might play at cup-and-ball, for twenty, thirty, forty miles of the great North Road, and at it again the next day as fresh as ever. I soon get tired of this now, and wonder how I managed formerly. I knew Tom Jones by heart, and was deep in

Peregrine Pickle. I was intimately acquainted with all the heroes and heroines of Richardson's romances, and could turn from one to the other as I pleased. I could con over that single passage in *Pamela* about "her lumpish heart," and never have done admiring the skill of the author and the truth of nature. I had my sports and recreations too some such as these following :—

"To see the sun to bed, and to arise,
Like some hot amourist, with glowing eyes
Bursting the lazy bands of sleep that bound him,
With all his fires and travelling glories round him.
Sometimes the moon on soft night clouds to rest,
Like beauty nestling in a young man's breast,
And all the winking stars, her handmaids, keep
Admiring silence while those lovers sleep.
Sometimes outstretched, in very idleness,
Nought doing, saying little, thinking less,
To view the leaves, thin dancers upon air,
Go eddying round and small birds how they fare,
When mother Autumn fills their beaks with corn,
Filched from the careless Amalthea's horn :
And how the woods berries and worms provide
Without their pains, when earth has nought beside
To answer their small wants.
To view the graceful deer come tripping by,
Then stop and gaze, then turn they know not why.
Like bashful youngers in society.
To mark the structure of a plant or tree,
And all fair things of earth, how fair they be."

I have wandered far enough from Burleigh House ; but I had some associations about it which I could not well get rid of without troubling the reader with them.

The *Reminiscents* disappointed me quite. I could hardly find a trace of the impression which had been inlaid in my imagination. I might as well

" Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream."

Instead of broken wrinkles and indented flesh, I saw hard

lines and stained canvas. I had seen better Rembrandts since, and had learned to see nature better. Was it a disadvantage, then, that for twenty years I had carried this fine idea in my brain, enriching it from time to time from my observations of nature or art, and raising it as they were raised? or did it much signify that it was disturbed at last? Neither. The picture was nothing to me: it was the idea it had suggested. The one hung on the wall at Burleigh; the other was an heirloom in my mind. Was it destroyed, because the picture, after long absence, did not answer to it? No. There were other pictures in the world that did, and objects in nature still more perfect. This is the melancholy privilege of art; it exists chiefly in idea, and is not liable to serious reverses. If we are disappointed in the character of one we love, it breaks the illusion altogether; for we draw certain consequences from a face. If an old friendship is broken up, we cannot tell how to replace it without the aid of habit and a length of time. But a picture is nothing but a face; it interests us only in idea. Hence we need never be afraid of raising our standard of taste too high; for the mind rises with it, exalted and refined, and can never be much injured by finding out its casual mistakes. Like the possessor of a splendid collection, who is indifferent to or turns away from common pictures, we have a selecter gallery in our own minds. In this sense, the knowledge of art is *its own exceeding great reward*. But is there not danger that we may become too fastidious, and have nothing left to admire? None: for the conceptions of the human soul cannot rise superior to the power of art; or if they do, then we have surely every reason to be satisfied with them. The mind, in what depends upon itself alone, "soon rises from defeat unhurt," though its pride may be for a moment "humbled by such rebuke,"

"And in its liquid texture mortal wound
Receives no more than can the fluid air."

As an illustration of the same thing, there are two Claudes at Burleigh, which certainly do not come up to the celebrity of the artist's name. They did not please me formerly: the sky, the water, the trees seemed all too blue, too much of the colour of indigo. But I believed, and wondered. I could no longer admire these specimens of the artist at present, but assuredly my admiration of the artist himself was not less than before; for since then I had seen other works by the same hand,

"Inimitable on earth
By model or by shading pencil drawn,"

surpassing every idea that the mind could form of art, except by having seen them. I remember one in particular that Walsh Porter had (a bowshot beyond all others)—a vernal landscape, an "Hesperian fable true," with a blue unclouded sky, and green trees and grey turrets and an unruffled sea beyond. But never was there sky so soft or trees so clad with spring, such air-drawn towers or such halcyon seas: Zephyr seemed to fan the air, and Nature looked on and smiled. The name of Claude has alone something in it that softens and harmonises the mind. It touches a magic chord. O matchless scenes! O orient skies, bright with purple and gold! ye opening glades and distant sunny vales, glittering with fleecy flocks, pour all your enchantment into my soul, let it reflect your chastened image, and forget all meaner things! Perhaps the most affecting tribute to the memory of this great artist is the character drawn of him by an eminent master in his "Dream of a Painter":—

"On a sudden I was surrounded by a thick cloud or mist, and my guide waited me through the air, till we alighted on a most delicious rural spot. I perceived it was the early hour of the morn, when the sun had not risen above the horizon. We were alone, except that at a little distance a young shepherd played on his flageolet as he walked before his herd, conducting them from the fold to the pasture. The elevated pastoral air he played

charmed me by its simplicity, and seemed to animate his obedient flock. The atmosphere was clear and perfectly calm; and now the rising sun gradually illumined the fine landscape, and began to discover to our view the distant country of immense extent. I stood awhile in expectation of what might next present itself of dazzling splendour, when the only object which appeared to fill this natural, grand, and simple scene, was a rustic, who entered not far from the place where we stood, who, by his habiliments, seemed nothing better than a peasant; he led a poor little ass, which was loaded with all the implements of a painter in his work. After advancing a few paces he stood still, and with an air of rapture seemed to contemplate the rising sun: he next fell on his knees, directed his eyes towards heaven, crossed himself, and then went on with eager looks, as if to make choice of the most advantageous spot from which to make his studies as a painter. 'This,' said my conductor, 'is that Claude Gelée of Lorraine who, nobly disdaining the low employment to which he was originally bred, left it, with all its advantages of competence and ease, to embrace his present state of poverty, in order to adorn the world with works of most accomplished excellence.'"

There is a little Paul Brill at Burleigh, in the same room with the Rembrandts, that dazzled me many years ago, and delighted me the other day. It looked as sparkling as if the sky came through the frame. I found, or fancied I found, those pictures the best that I remembered before, though they might in the interval have faded a little to my eyes, or lost some of their original brightness. I did not see the small head of Queen Mary by Holbein, which formerly struck me so forcibly; but I have little doubt respecting it, for Holbein was a sure hand: he only wanted effect, and this picture looked through you. One of my old favourites was the *Head of an Angel* by Guido, nearly a profile, looking up, and with wings behind the back. It was hung lower than it used to be, and had, I thought, a look less aerial, less heavenly; but there was still a pulpy softness in it, a tender grace, an expression unutterable, which only the pencil, *his* pencil, could convey! And are we not, then, beholden to the art for these glimpses of Paradise? Surely there is a sweetness in Guido's heads, as

there is also a music in his name. If Raffaele did more, it was not with the same ease. His heads have more meaning; but Guido's have a look of youthful innocence, which his are without. As to the boasted picture of Christ by Carlo Dolce, if a well-painted tablecloth and silver cup are worth three thousand guineas, the picture is so, but not else. One touch of Paul Veronese is worth all this enamelling twice over. The head has a wretched mawkish expression, utterly unbecoming the character it professes to represent. But I will say no more about it. *The Bath of Seneca* is one of Luca Jordano's best performances, and has considerable interest and effect. Among other historical designs, there is one of *Jacob's Dream*, with the angels ascending and descending on a kind of stairs. The conception is very answerable to the subject; but the execution is not in any high degree spirited or graceful. The mind goes away no gainer from the picture. Rembrandt alone, perhaps, could add anything to this subject. Of him it might be said that "his light shone in darkness!" The wreaths of flowers and foliage carved in wood on the wainscots and ceiling of many of the rooms by the celebrated Grinling Gibbons, in Charles the Second's time, show a wonderful lightness and facility of hand, and give pleasure to the eye. The other ornaments and curiosities I need not mention, as they are carefully pointed out by the house-keeper to the admiring visitor. There are two heads, however (one of them happens to have a screen placed before it), which I would by no means wish any one to pass over who is an artist, or feels the slightest interest in the art. They are, I should suppose, unquestionably the original studies by Raffaele of the heads of the *Virgin* and *Joseph* in his famous picture of the *Mary of the Crown*. The *Virgin* is particularly beautiful, and in the finest preservation, as indeed are all his genuine pictures. The canvas is not quite covered in some places; the colours are as fresh as if newly laid on, and the execution is as firm and

vigorous as if his hand had just left it. It shows us how this artist wrought. The head is, no doubt, a highly-finished study from nature, done for a particular purpose, and worked up according to the painter's conception, but still retaining all the force and truth of individuality. He got all he could from nature, and gave all he could to her in return. If Raffaele had merely sketched this divine face on the canvas from the idea in his own mind, why not stamp it on the larger composition at once? He could work it up, and refine upon it there just as well, and it would almost necessarily undergo some alteration in being transferred thither afterwards. But if it was done as a careful copy from Nature in the first instance, the present was the only way in which he could proceed, or indeed by which he could arrive at such consummate excellence. The head of the Joseph (leaning on the hand and looking down) is fine, but neither so fine as the companion to it, nor is it by any means so elaborately worked up in the sketch before us.

I am no teller of stories ; but there is one belonging to Burleigh House of which I happen to know some of the particulars. The late Earl of Exeter had been divorced from his first wife, a woman of fashion, and of somewhat more gaiety of manners than "lords who love their ladies like." He determined to seek out a second wife in an humbler sphere of life, and that it should be one who, having no knowledge of his rank, should love him for himself alone. For this purpose he went and settled *incognito* (under the name of Mr Jones) at Hodnet, an obscure village in Shropshire. He made overtures to one or two damsels in the neighbourhood, but they were too knowing to be taken in by him. His manners were not boorish, his mode of life was retired, it was odd how he got his livelihood, and at last he began to be taken for a highwayman. In this dilemma he turned to Miss Hoggins, the eldest daughter of a small farmer at whose house he

lodged. Miss Hoggins, it might seem, had not been used to romp with the clowns ; there was something in the manners of their quiet but eccentric guest that she liked. As he found that he had inspired her with that kind of regard which he wished for, he made honourable proposals to her, and at the end of some months they were married without his letting her know who he was. They set off in a post-chaise from her father's house, and travelled homewards across the country. In this manner they arrived at Stamford, and passed through the town without stopping till they came to the entrance of Burleigh Park, which is on the outside of it. The gates flew open, the chaise entered, and drove up the long avenue of trees that leads up to the front of this fine old mansion. As they drew nearer to it, and she seemed a little surprised where they were going, he said, " Well, my dear, this is Burleigh House ; it is the home I have promised to bring you to, and you are the Countess of Exeter ! " It is said the shock of this discovery was too much for this young creature, and that she never recovered it. It was a sensation worth dying for. The world we live in was worth making, had it been only for this. Ye " Thousand and One Tales of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments," hide your diminished heads ! I never wish to have been a lord but when I think of this story.

PICTURES AT OXFORD AND BLENHEIM.

ROME has been called the "Sacred City:" might not *our* Oxford be called so too? There is an air about it resonant of joy and hope: it speaks with a thousand tongues to the heart: it waves its mighty shadow over the imagination: it stands in lowly sublimity on the "hill of ages," and points with prophetic fingers to the sky: it greets the eager gaze from afar "with glistening spires and pinnacles adorned," that shine with an eternal light as with the lustre of setting suns; and a dream and a glory hover round its head, as the spirits of former times, a throng of intellectual shapes, are seen retreating or advancing to the eye of memory: its streets are paved with the names of learning that can never wear out: its green quadrangles breathe the silence of thought, conscious of the weight of yearnings innumerable after the past, of loftiest aspirations for the future: Isis babbles of the Muse, its waters are from the springs of Helicon, its Christ Church meadows, classic, Elysian fields! we could pass our lives in Oxford without having or wanting any other idea—that of the place is enough. We imbibe the air of thought; we stand in the presence of learning. We are admitted into the Temple of Fame, we feel that we are in the sanctuary, on holy ground, and "hold high converse with the mighty dead." The enlightened and the ignorant are on a level if they have but faith, in the tutelary genius of the place. We may be wise by proxy, and studious by prescription. Time has taken upon himself the labour of thinking; and accumulated libraries leave us leisure to be dull. There is no occasion to examine the buildings,

the churches, the colleges, by the rules of architecture, to reckon up the streets, to compare it with Cambridge (Cambridge lies out of the way, on one side of the world); but woe to him who does not feel in passing through Oxford that he is in "no mean city," that he is surrounded with the monuments and lordly mansions of the mind of man, outvying in pomp and splendour the courts and palaces of princes, rising like an exhalation in the night of ignorance, and triumphing over barbaric foes, saying, "All eyes shall see me, and all knees shall bow to me!"—as the shrine where successive ages came to pay their pious vows, and slake the sacred thirst of knowledge; where youthful hopes (an endless flight) soared to truth and good; and where the retired and lonely student brooded over the historic or over fancy's page, imposing high tasks for himself, framing high destinies for the race of man—the lamp, the mine, the well-head whence the spark of learning was kindled, its stream flowed, its treasures were spread out through the remotest corners of the land and to distant nations. Let him, then, who is fond of indulging in a dream-like existence, go to Oxford, and stay there; let him study this magnificent spectacle, the same under all aspects, with its mental twilight tempering the glare of noon, or mellowing the silver moonlight; let him wander in her sylvan suburbs, or linger in her cloistered halls; but let him not catch the din of scholars or teachers, or dine or sup with them, or speak a word to any of the privileged inhabitants; for if he does, the spell will be broken, the poetry and the religion gone, and the palace of the enchantment will melt from his embrace into thin air!

The only Collection of Pictures at Oxford is that at the Bodleian Library, bequeathed by Sir William Guise. It is so far appropriate that it is dingy, solemn, old; and we would gladly leave it to its repose; but where criticism comes, affection "clappeth his wings, and straightway he is gone." Most of the pictures are either copies or spoiled,

or never were good for anything. There is, however, a *Music Piece* by Titian, which bears the stamp of his hand, and is "majestic though in ruins." It represents three young ladies practising at a harpsichord, with their music-master looking on. One of the girls is tall, with prominent features seen in profile, but exquisitely fair, and with a grave expression; the other is a lively, good-humoured girl, in a front view; and the third leans forward from behind, looking down with a demure, reserved, sentimental cast of countenance, but very pretty, and much like an English face. The teacher has a manly countenance, with a certain blended air of courtesy and authority. It is a fascinating picture to our thinking, and has that marked characteristic look, belonging to each individual and to the subject, which is always to be found in Titian's groups. We also noticed a dingy, melancholy-looking Head over the window of the farthest room, said to be a *Portrait of Vandyck*, with something striking in the tone and expression; and a small *Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise*, attributed to Giuseppe Ribera, which has considerable merit. The amateur will here find continual copies (of an indifferent class) of many of his old favourite pictures of the Italian school—Titian, Domenichino, Correggio, and others. But the most valuable part of the Collection consists of four undoubted Heads cut out of one of the *Cartoons*, which was destroyed by fire about a hundred years ago: they are here preserved in their pristine integrity. They show us what the *Cartoons* were. They have all the spirit and freedom of Raffaele's hand, but without any of the blotches and smearing of those at Hampton Court; with which the damp of outhouses and the dews of heaven have evidently had nearly as much to do as the painter. Two are heads of men, and two of women: one of the last, *Rachel weeping for her Children*; and another still finer (both are profiles), in which all the force and boldness of masculine understanding is combined with feminine soft-

ness of expression. The large ox-like eye, a "lucid mirror," with the eyelids drooping and the long eyelashes distinctly marked, the straight scrutinising nose, the full but closed lips, the matronly chin and high forehead, altogether convey a character of matured thought and expansive feeling such as is seldom to be met with. *Rachel weeping for her Children* has a sterner and more painful, but a very powerful expression. It is heroic rather than pathetic. The heads of the men are spirited and forcible, but they are distinguished chiefly by the firmness of the outline and the sharpness and mastery of the execution.

Blenheim is a morning's walk from Oxford, and is not an unworthy appendage to it—

" And fast by hanging in a golden chain
This pendent world, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude, close by the moon ! "

Blenheim is not inferior in waving woods and sloping lawns and smooth waters to Pembroke's princely domain, or to the grounds of any other park we know of. The building itself is Gothic, capricious, and not imposing—a conglomeration of pigeon-houses—

" In form resembling a goose-pie"—

but as a receptacle for works of art (with the exception of Cleveland House) it is unrivalled in this country. There is not a bad picture in it : the interest is sustained by rich and noble performances from first to last. It abounds in Rubens' works. The old Duchess of Marlborough was fond of the historical pieces of this great painter : she had during her husband's war and negotiations in Flanders a fine opportunity of culling them, "as one picks pears, saying, This I like, that I like still better ;" and from the selection she has made, it appears as if she understood the master's genius well. She has chosen those of his works which were most mellow, and at the same time gorgeous in colouring, most luxuriant in composition, most unctuous

in expression. Rubens was the only artist that could have embodied some of our countryman Spenser's splendid and voluptuous allegories. If a painter among ourselves were to attempt a SPENSER GALLERY (perhaps the finest subject for the pencil in the world after Heathen Mythology and Scripture History), he ought to go and study the principles of his design at Blenheim! The *Silenus* and the *Rape of Proserpine* contain more of the Bacchanalian and lawless spirit of ancient fable than perhaps any two pictures extant. We shall not dispute that Nicholas Poussin could probably give more of the abstract, metaphysical character of his traditional personages, or that Titian could set them off better, so as to "leave stings" in the eye of the spectator, by a prodigious *gusto* of colouring, as in his *Bacchus and Ariadne*; but neither of them gave the same undulating outline, the same humid *pulpy* tone to the flesh, the same graceful involution to the grouping and the forms, the same animal spirits, the same breathing motion. Let any one look at the figure of the *Silenus* in the first-mentioned of these compositions—its unwieldy size, its reeling drunken attitude, its capacity for revelling in gross sensual enjoyment—and contrast it with the figure of the nymph, so light, so wanton, so fair, that her clear crystal skin and laughing grace spread a ruddy glow, and account for the giddy tumult all around her, and say if anything finer in this kind was ever executed or imagined. In that sort of licentious fancy, in which a certain grossness of expression bordered on caricature, and where grotesque or enticing form was to be combined with free and rapid movements, or different tones and colours were to be flung over the picture as in sport or in a dance, no one ever surpassed the Flemish painter; and some of the greatest triumphs of his pencil are to be found in the Blenheim Gallery. There are several others of his best pictures on sacred subjects, such as the *Flight into Egypt*, and the illustration of the text, "Suffer little children to

come unto me." The head and figure and deportment of the Christ in this last admirable production are nobly characteristic (beyond what the painter usually accomplished in this department)—the face of a woman holding a young child, pale, pensive, with scarce any shadow, and the head of the child itself (looking as vacant and satisfied as if the nipple had just dropped from its mouth) are actually alive. Those who can look at this picture with indifference, or without astonishment at the truth of nature and the felicity of execution, may rest assured that they know as little of Rubens as of the art itself. Vandyck, the scholar and rival of Rubens, holds the next place in this Collection. There is here, as in so many other places, a picture of the famous Lord Strafford with his Secretary—both speaking heads, and with the characters finely diversified. We were struck also by the delightful family picture of the Duchess of Buckingham and her Children, but not so much (we confess it) as we expected from our recollection of this picture a few years ago. It had less the effect of a perfect mirror of fashion in "the olden time" than we fancied to ourselves: the little girl had less exquisite primness and studied gentility; the little boy had not the same chubby, good humoured look, and the colours in his cheek had faded; nor had the mother the same graceful, matron-like air. Is it we that have changed, or the picture? In general our expectations tally pretty well with our after-observations, but there was a falling-off in the present instance. There is a fine whole-length of a lady of quality of that day (we think Lady Cleveland); but the masterpiece of Vandyck's pencil here is his *Charles I. on Horseback*. It is the famous cream or fawn coloured horse which, of all the creatures that ever were painted, is surely one of the most beautiful:

"Sure never were seen
Two such beautiful ponies;
All others are brutes,
But these macaronies."

Its steps are delicate, as if it moved to some soft measure or courtly strain, or disdained the very ground it trod upon ; its form all lightness and elegance ; the expression quick and fiery ; the colour inimitable ; the texture of the skin sensitive and tremblingly alive all over, as if it would shrink from the smallest touch. The portrait of Charles is not equal ; but there is a landscape background, which in breezy freshness seems almost to rival the airy spirit and delicacy of the noble animal. There are also one or two fine Rembrandts (particularly a *Jacob and Esau*) ; an early Raffaele, the *Adoration* of some saint, hard and stiff, but carefully designed ; and a fine, sensible, graceful head of the *Fornarina*, of which we have a common and well-executed engraving.

“ But did you see the Titian room ? ” Yes, we did, and a glorious treat it was ; nor do we know why it should not be shown to every one. There is nothing alarming but the title of the subjects—*The Loves of the Gods*—just as was the case with Mr T. Moore’s *Loves of the Angels*—but oh, how differently treated ! What a gusto in the first, compared with the insipidity of the last ! What streaks of living blood-colour, so unlike gauze spangles or pink silk stockings ! What union, what symmetry of form, instead of sprawling, flimsy descriptions ! What an expression of amorous enjoyment about the mouth, the eyes, and even to the finger-ends, instead of cold conceits and moonlight similes ! This is *en passant* ; so to our task. It is said these pictures were discovered in an old lumber-room by Sir Joshua Reynolds, who set a high value on them, and that they are undoubtedly by Titian, having been originally sent over as a present by the King of Sardinia (for whose ancestor they were painted) to the first Duke of Marlborough. We should (without, however, pretending to set up an opinion) incline, from the internal evidence, to think them from the pencil of the great Venetian but for two circumstances : the first is the texture of the skin ; and,

secondly, they do not compose well as pictures. They have no background to set them off, but a most ridiculous trellis-work, representing nothing, hung round them ; and the flesh looks monotonous and hard, like the rind of fruit. On the other hand, this last objection seems to be answered satisfactorily enough, and without impugning the skill of the artist ; for the pictures are actually painted on skins of leather. In all other respects they might assuredly be by Titian, and we know of no other painter who was capable of achieving their various excellences. The drawing of the female figure is correct and elegant in a high degree, and might be supposed to be borrowed from classic sculpture, but that it is more soft, more feminine, more lovely. The colouring, with the exception already stated, is true, spirited, golden, harmonious. The grouping and attitudes are heroic, the expression in some of the faces divine. We do not mean, of course, that it possesses the elevation or purity that Raffaello or Correggio could give, but it is warmer, more thrilling and ecstatic. There is the glow and ripeness of a more genial clime, the purple light of love, crimsoned blushes, looks bathed in rapture, kisses with immortal sweetness in their taste—nay, then, let the reader go and see the pictures, and no longer lay the blame of this extravagance on us. We may at any rate repeat the subjects. They are eight in number. 1. *Mars and Venus*. The Venus is well worthy to be called the Queen of Love, for shape, for air, for everything. Her redoubted lover is a middle-aged, ill-looking gentleman, clad in a buff-jerkin, and somewhat of a formalist in his approaches and mode of address ; but there is a Cupid playing on the floor who might well turn the world upside down. 2. *Cupid and Psyche*. The Cupid is perhaps rather a gawky, awkward stripling, with eager, open-mouthed wonder ; but did ever creature of mortal mould see anything comparable to the back and limbs of the Psyche, or conceive or read anything equal to it, but that unique description in the “Troilus

and Cressida" of Chaucer? 3. *Apollo and Daphne*. Not equal to the rest. 4. *Hercules and Dejanira*. The female figure in this picture is full of grace and animation, and the arms that are twined round the great son of Jove are elastic as a bended bow. 5. *Vulcan and Ceres*. 6. *Pluto and Proserpine*. 7. *Jupiter and Io*. Very fine. And finest of all, and last, *Neptune and Amphitrite*. In this last work it seems "as if increase of appetite did grow with what it fed on." What a face is that of Amphitrite for beauty and for sweetness of expression! One thing is remarkable in these groups (with the exception of two), which is that the lovers are all of them old men; but then they retain their beards (according to the custom of the good old times!) and this makes not only a picturesque contrast, but gives a beautiful softness and youthful delicacy to the female faces opposed to them. Upon the whole, this series of historic compositions well deserves the attention of the artist and the connoisseur, and perhaps some light might be thrown upon the subject of their authenticity by turning over some old portfolios. We have heard a hint thrown out that the designs are of a date prior to Titian. But "we are ignorance itself in this!"

THE END.



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